

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Opportunity Title: Hajj Research Grant

Code: SNIH-RO-HRP-PH01-2502

FUNDING YEAR: FY 2025

OPEN LETTER OF INTENT SUBMISSION: April 24, 2025

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: April 30, 2025

OPEN PROPOSAL SUBMISSION: May 12, 2025

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: May 21, 2025

2025

Research Office

Saudi National Institute of Health

Synopsis

General information		
		Code
Funding Organization	Saudi NIH	SNIH
Administration Information	Research Office	RO
Application Type	New	
Opportunity Name	Hajj Research Grant	SNIH-RO-HRP-PH01-2502
Opportunity Announcement	24-04-2025	
Open Letter of Intent Submission	24-04-2025	
Letter of Intent Submission Deadline	30-04-2025	
Open Proposal Submission	12-05-2025	
Proposal Submission Deadline	21-05-2025	
Notice of Award	05-06-2025	
Earliest Project Start	05-06-2025	

Eligibility

Eligible Organization	Governmental organizations within the Makkah and Al-Madinah Regions, including academic institutions, hospitals, research institutes, research centers, military and defense-related health research centers.
Eligible Individuals	Eligible organizations must nominate one or more Program Director(s) (PD)/ Principal Investigator(s) (PI) to lead the research team. The PD/ PI must hold a doctorate degree or an equivalent in a relevant field, have a research record that includes publications in prestigious scientific journals, and not be the principal investigator of a currently Saudi NIH-supported project.

Additional information

Description and Scope	The Saudi NIH presents this opportunity to support research and innovation in priority areas related to Hajj season in Saudi Arabia. Priority areas include assessing disease burden and risk factors, improving healthcare access and quality, and evaluating the effectiveness of public health interventions. This opportunity also encourages research into the economic impact of health measures, epidemic preparedness, surveillance of zoonotic and neglected diseases, and resource allocation strategies during Hajj. Additionally, studies focusing on the integration of artificial intelligence and advanced surveillance systems to enhance health responses are encouraged.
Clinical Trial Allowability	Not allowed.
Contact Information	GRANTS@SNIH.GOV.SA

Executive Summary

The Hajj Research Grant funding opportunity support research aimed at improving public health outcomes during the Hajj season in Saudi Arabia. Priority areas include disease burden analysis, healthcare quality, public health interventions, economic impact, epidemic preparedness, and surveillance of zoonotic and neglected diseases. The use of AI and advanced surveillance for better health responses during Hajj is also encouraged.

Eligibility is reserved for governmental organizations within the Makkah and Al-Madinah Regions, including public academic institutions, hospitals, research institutes, research centers, military and defense-related health research centers.

Eligible organizations must nominate one or more Program Director(s) (PD)/ Principal Investigator(s) (PI) to lead the research team. The PD/ PI must hold a doctorate degree or an equivalent in a relevant field, have a research record that includes publications in prestigious scientific journals, and not be the principal investigator of a currently Saudi NIH-supported project.

Multiple scientifically distinct applications per organization are allowed, with a maximum budget of SAR 500,000 per project.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
BACKGROUND	5
THE SAUDI NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH.....	5
THE RESEARCH OFFICE	5
SCOPE AND OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	5
ELIGIBILITY.....	6
ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS	6
ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS	6
FUNDING ALLOCATION	6
ALLOWABLE COSTS.....	6
BUDGET GUIDELINES.....	8
REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	9
EVALUATION CRITERIA	11
EXPECTED RESEARCH OUTCOMES.....	11
REPORTING AND MONITORING	12
OTHER INFORMATION	12
HOW TO APPLY.....	12
EXTENSION OF THE PROJECT EXECUTION PERIOD	12
DATA SHARING	12
CONFIDENTIALITY	12

Background

The Saudi National Institute of Health

The Saudi National Institute of Health (Saudi NIH) focuses on implementing a strategy based directly on prioritizing translational research and clinical trials to meet public health needs, while working to identify and mitigate challenges that hinder the development of effective and high-quality research, strengthening coordination and scientific collaboration, and improving the impact of the research and innovation system in the health sector. Therefore, one of the ways through which the Saudi NIH aims to achieve its goals is to create funding opportunities for promising clinical and translational health research through research support initiatives run by the Research Office at the Saudi NIH.

The Research Office

The Research Office is the departments of the Saudi NIH that oversees the design, implementation, and evaluation of the Institute's funding opportunities and programs. In addition, the Research Office is responsible for announcing grants, processing applications, overseeing peer-review processes, contracting, and monitoring of funded research. The Research Office also sets the administrative, technical, and financial regulations and policies for health research in line with the needs of researchers and the policies and regulations in force inside and outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Opportunity Description and Scope

The Hajj season poses unique opportunities and challenges to public health in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This underpins the need for research and innovation to enhance public health outcomes related to Hajj. Therefore, the Saudi NIH presents this opportunity to support research and innovation in priority areas related to Hajj season in Saudi Arabia. Priority areas include assessing disease burden and risk factors, improving healthcare access and quality, and evaluating the effectiveness of public health interventions. This opportunity also encourages research into the economic impact of health measures, epidemic preparedness, surveillance of zoonotic and neglected diseases, and resource allocation strategies during Hajj. Additionally, studies focusing on the integration of artificial intelligence and advanced surveillance systems to enhance health responses are encouraged.

Eligibility

Eligible Organizations

Eligibility for this opportunity is reserved for governmental organizations within the Makkah and Al-Madinah Regions, including public academic institutions, hospitals, research institutes, research centers, and military and defense-related health research centers. Research proposals may be submitted in collaboration with multiple organizations, provided that the Principal Investigator is affiliated with an organization eligible for the grant from the Makkah or Madinah Regions.

Applicant organizations may submit one or more applications, provided that each application is scientifically distinct. The Saudi NIH will not accept duplicate or highly overlapping applications under review at the same time

Eligible Individuals

Organizations must nominate one or more Program Director (PD)/ Principal Investigator (PI) to lead the research team with skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research.

The PD/ PI for the proposed project must hold a doctorate degree or an equivalent in a relevant field, have a research record that includes publications in prestigious scientific journals, and not be the principal investigator of a currently Saudi NIH-supported project. A PI is limited to one research project. A co-investigator may participate in a maximum of five Saudi NIH-supported research projects under this or other grants. All PDs/ PIs must have an account on the [Saudi NIH Application Platform](#).

Funding Allocation

Awardees will receive the funding amount according to their signed contract. The Saudi NIH has the right to determine the allocation of funding based on its list of policies and regulations.

Allowable Costs

Reasonable expenses related to knowledge translation, networking, commercialization, and community-based research are considered eligible costs in the context of this grant. Cost categories are as follows:

1. Costs shall be deemed allowable under Saudi NIH grants if they meet the following conditions:
 - a. They are reasonable and logical—at the Saudi NIH’s discretion—considering the nature of the cost and its necessity to achieve the project’s objectives.
 - b. They can be directly allocated to the Saudi NIH grants or to participating institutions in the research project.

- c. They are treated consistently in accordance with the Saudi NIH's approved financial policies.
 - d. They comply with the provisions of the agreement and remain unchanged throughout the project implementation period.
2. Subject to the maximum limits for cost categories, a proposal shall allocate its budget to one or more categories, provided that sufficient written justification is submitted and prior written approval is obtained from the Saudi NIH.
3. The maximum limits for cost categories shall be calculated based on the total submitted budget amount or the maximum allocated amount for each grant program, as defined in the grant announcement.
4. In accordance with the Grant Regulations and these Procedural Rules, the Saudi NIH reserves the right to revise the maximum limits of cost categories and the amounts allocated for salaries and incentives annually, as needed.
5. Costs associated with research projects funded by the Saudi NIH are classified as either direct costs or indirect costs, as follows:
 - a. Direct Costs: Costs that can be clearly and directly attributed to the research project, including:
 - i. Salaries and Incentives: Includes compensation for principal investigators, co-investigators, research teams, consultants, temporary staff, and graduate students.
 - ii. Research Supplies and Materials: Includes equipment, devices, and research materials, as well as the cost of essential research services. It also covers maintenance and repair costs if necessary for equipment used in the project.
 - iii. Travel and Conferences: Includes all domestic and international travel directly related to the project, such as attending scientific conferences, workshops, training, visits to collaborating labs, research meetings, data collection, and other activities that support the project objectives.
 - iv. Contractual and Consulting Services: Includes contracting individuals or entities to perform project-specific tasks, in accordance with the institution's internal regulations.
 - v. Scientific Outputs: Includes costs directly related to scientific dissemination, such as publishing in peer-reviewed journals, books, scientific conferences, printing, translation, and editorial services.
 - vi. Patents: Covers all expenses related to protecting intellectual property arising from the research.
 - vii. Clinical Study Costs: Includes essential and direct costs related to protocol development, scientific or legal consultations (e.g., regulatory and administrative fees, coordination with ethics

committees, protocol reviews, etc.), as well as scientific and technical costs such as participant recruitment, compensation, medical tests, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, therapeutic interventions, data management, infrastructure, insurance, and other necessary costs in accordance with applicable regulations.

- viii. Operating Expenses (Petty Cash Advances): Temporary advances provided to the institution or Principal Investigator for approved project needs listed in the approved budget.
- ix. Other Costs: Any other cost items added by the Saudi NIH to the agreement in line with the nature of the grant and these procedural rules.
- b. Indirect Costs (Administrative Support): These are calculated by the institution as an agreed percentage of direct costs and include general administrative and oversight activities, building operations and maintenance, IT services, salaries of support staff, expenses of technology transfer offices, indirect costs incurred by external collaborating institutions, and other expenses that cannot be directly attributed to the research project.
- c. Unallowable Costs: These include activities not directly related to the research project, any costs exceeding the approved budget without prior approval, personal expenses, or any expenses that violate the Saudi NIH's financial policies or applicable financial regulations in Saudi Arabia.

Budget Guidelines

The maximum requested budget per proposed project for this grant is SAR 500,000.

Applicants must provide solid justifications for their requested budget and adhere to the Saudi NIH budget guidelines regulations:

1. All costs shall be included in the approved project budget. Any amendments to budget line items shall require prior written approval from the Saudi NIH. Costs shall be considered allowable if they are direct, necessary to achieve the project's objectives, and clearly justified.
2. All cost items shall comply with the Saudi NIH's financial policies and all applicable financial regulations in force within Saudi Arabia.
3. Disbursement of costs shall occur strictly within the approved project duration. Costs incurred prior to the project start date or following its end date shall be disallowed, unless prior written approval is obtained from the Saudi NIH.
4. Subject to maximum allowable limits for specific cost categories (e.g., salaries and incentives, research supplies and materials, travel and conferences, consultations, and service contracts), exceptions shall be permitted only upon submission of sufficient written justification and prior written approval from the Saudi NIH.

5. Within the applicable limits for cost categories, costs associated with joint projects and external collaborators shall be treated as direct costs and allocated within the project's sub-budget. These costs shall be disbursed directly by the primary funded institution in accordance with the approved budget.
6. The maximum allowable cost for each budget line item related to joint projects and external collaborators shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total amount allocated to that line item in the overall project budget.
7. Capital equipment costs shall not be allocated to research activities conducted outside of Saudi Arabia, unless a valid justification is submitted and formally approved by the Saudi NIH.
8. Periodic financial reports must be submitted, detailing expenditures under each cost category, and accurate records of all costs must be maintained for review when required.
9. Any surplus in budget line items shall be either reallocated within the project or returned to the Saudi NIH, in accordance with prior written agreement.
10. Undocumented costs or those that violate these rules shall be borne by the institution or the Principal Investigator.
11. All costs shall be calculated in Saudi Riyals. Fractional Riyals shall be disregarded in cost estimations.

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

Table 2: The Saudi NIH review process and timeline

Stage	Description	Timeline
Letter of Intent Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants will submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) through the Saudi NIH Application Platform. 	April 24, 2025 – April 30, 2025
Letter of Intent Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Saudi NIH will pre-screen the LOI. The Scientific Review Committee will review the LOI. The Saudi NIH will inform applicants of the decision.. 	May 1, 2025 – May 8, 2025
Proposal Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who have been informed of their LOI acceptance will submit their full research proposal through the Saudi NIH Application Platform. 	May 12, 2025 – May 21, 2025
Prescreening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Saudi NH will begin prescreening applications as soon as they are submitted. Applications are screened for eligibility, originality, completion, and compliance with the Saudi NIH Grants Policy. 	

Technical Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Saudi NIH will conduct a technical review of applications that passed the prescreening stage. • Applications will be reviewed to ascertain that all therequirements have been fulfilled. 	May 22, 2025 – June 4, 2025
Scientific Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scientific review committee will assess and score applications based on scientific merit. 	
Ethical Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Saudi NIH will review all the documents and approvals, including the Institutional Review Board approval, to ensure they are aligned with the National Committee of Bioethics. 	
Notice of Award and Earliest Project Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final approval will be held by at least five review members, with the presence of the Board Chair to discuss the scored research proposals received from the Saudi NIH. • The final approval is made by the Chief Executive Officer of the Saudi NIH. • The Saudi NIH will communicate with the applicants to inform them that they have been nominated to receive the award. • Projects may commence after receiving the Notice of Award. 	June 5, 2025
Reporting and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After receiving the Notice of Award, applicants are required to agree to undergo monitoring by the Saudi NIH for the duration of the research project. • Systems will be in place for monitoring all activities involving human subjects. • The Saudi NIH has the right to conduct periodic visits to the awarded institutions' research sites to conduct evaluations. • A final technical report will be required at the end of the research project. The Saudi NIH will provide the awarded applicant with a deadline specifying the date for submitting the final report. 	Starting June 2025 and ending within 12 months of project start.

Award Close-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Saudi NIH will end the award period, ensuring that agreed-upon milestones have been reached. • The awardee must present all the necessary documentation for the scientific review committee and the Ethics and Compliance Department to issue approvals for award close-out. • The results of the research project are subject to disclosure according to the Saudi NIH Grants Policy. 	Starting and ending at the date specified in the project contract.
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Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the announced grant scope.
- The integrity of the work.
- Significance of the problem.
- Approach to resolve the problem.
- The soundness of the rationale.
- The realistic estimation of outcomes.
- Risk management criteria.
- Alignment with the Saudi NIH strategy and the National Vision 2030.

Expected Research Outcomes

- Publications in scientific journals and scientific meetings (i.e. Research papers, scientific reports, abstracts, scientific lectures...)
- Patents.
- Awards and acknowledgements.
- Products, such as diagnostic and preventative healthcare equipment, and AI-based software solutions.
- Proposed policies, guidelines, and recommendations.
- Recommendations for public health programs.
- Establishment or enhancement of databases, registries, or surveillance systems.
- Evidence that informs national strategies or supports decision-making.
- Cross-sectoral, national, or international collaborations that strengthen research impact.
- Technology transfer or commercialization plans.
- Measurable improvements in service delivery, access, or health outcomes.

Reporting and Monitoring

After applicants are informed that their application has been selected for the award, they will be required to agree to undergo monitoring by the Saudi NIH for the duration of their research project. The monitoring process may involve periodic site visits and requires the completion of progress reports submitted by the awardees. A final technical report will be required at the end of the project.

Other Information

How to Apply

Researchers interested in applying must register to the [Saudi NIH Application Platform](#) to submit the application, then apply through the following link: [Start an application](#)

The Saudi NIH will only accept applications submitted through its Application Platform. Please take advantage of the submission manual tool provided to you [here](#) to guide you through the registration and submission processes.

Extension of the Project Execution Period

If additional time is required beyond the originally agreed period without incurring financial obligations, awarded researchers must submit a request for an extension at least 40 working days before the project's end date.

Data Sharing

- Data and products generated from the awarded project are subject to intellectual property and data-sharing conditions and Saudi NIH policies.
- Applicants may need to provide approval from their institution's Scientific Research Ethics Committee following the initial research opportunity approval.
- Extracted data will be preserved for research purposes and may be reused by other researchers in the same field.
- Research outcomes will be used for decision-making, awareness, and may be further applied in subsequent studies.

Confidentiality

All information submitted by applicants is confidential. In accordance with the Saudi NIH Grants Policy, all application reviewers must adhere to the confidentiality guidelines set forth by the Saudi NIH.

End of Request for Applications