



# **NUTRITION SOCIETY OF NIGERIA**

## **Special Newsletter Edition**

**GRAND CHALLENGES NIGERIA LAUNCH & FUNDING CALL IN  
MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH**

***December, 2024***

# Grand Challenges Nigeria Launch & Funding Call in Maternal & Child Health

## Distinguished Members of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria,

On Monday, November 18, 2024, the Nutrition Society of Nigeria (NSN), in partnership with the Office of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology (FMIST) officially launched the Grand Challenges Nigeria (GCNg) initiative at the State House, Abuja to fund and advance impactful research and innovations in health, food systems, and development in Nigeria.



On behalf of Grand Challenges Nigeria, we sincerely thank His Highness, Muhammad Sanusi II, CON, PhD (London) for his presence and support at the national launch and RFP announcement. Your attendance as a distinguished leader highlighted the initiative's significance for improving lives across Nigeria. We deeply appreciate your inspiring words, encouraging commitment through "focused effort" and "collective action." Your dedication to the Nutrition Society of Nigeria is immeasurable, and we pray for your continued blessings. With your guidance, we are confident Grand Challenges Nigeria will drive impactful solutions for Nigerians.

We really thank Professor Hafiz Abubakar (Mfr, D.Sc) for his invaluable support at the national launch event and RFP announcement. His presence underscored the importance of this initiative and its potential to improve lives across Nigeria. Your unwavering dedication to the Nutrition Society of Nigeria (NSN) and Grand Challenges Nigeria is inestimable. Thank you for your

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With initial funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Nigeria is coordinated by the Nutrition Society of Nigeria and operates in partnership with key government stakeholders and other organisations. These partnerships ensure that GCNng aligns with national priorities and builds on Nigeria's existing capabilities in science and innovation. The vision of the NSN is to promote sound research and learning; build skills, competencies, and capacity; enhance and improve professionalism; collaborate with relevant government MDAs, development partners and private sector foundations or corporate foundations; create awareness through high-level advocacy; and create an enabling environment that fosters innovations and entrepreneurship to create disruptive market solutions through information on and exposure to accessible grants, research outputs, and industry collaborations. The secretariat for Grand Challenges in Nigeria (GCNng) was established by the NSN and the Society has successfully pulled together a coalition of government and other sector partner organizations who will lead the project for impact over the next decade.

Grand Challenges Nigeria is a National initiative under the Global Grand Challenges family, and is a platform for mobilizing innovators and resources to solve hard development problems at the point where they are hardest. As the seventh African country to join the Grand Challenges family, after Botswana, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa, Nigeria is poised to leverage innovative solutions to tackle some of its most pressing health challenges thanks to the efforts of the NSN. Recognising the importance of country-specific solutions, Grand Challenges Nigeria (GCNng) focuses on leveraging innovation to improve health outcomes, foster gender equality, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Nigerian context. GCNng will empower Nigerian researchers, scientists, and development practitioners to lead innovative solutions addressing local challenges in key areas such as health, agriculture, and food systems. By building local capacity and strengthening collaborations among government, academia, and the private sector, as well as local and international partnerships, GCNng seeks to create long-term, sustainable impact across Nigeria. We strive to make the biggest possible difference, save the most lives possible, and unlock the power of innovations through its multisectoral engagement.

The first request for proposals (RFP) whose theme is: "Advancing Innovative Solutions for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health," was also announced at the launch, and through it, GCNng seeks to identify and support innovative, scalable ideas and interventions that leverage local contexts to address critical challenges in maternal, newborn, and child health, ultimately prioritising human health and development is also being issued alongside the launch. This RFP will provide seed grant funding up to 60 million Naira per grant for a 12 to 15-month project implementation period. The final grant amount awarded will be determined based on the specific needs, scope, and proposed budget of the project. Applicants are encouraged to submit realistic budget proposals that reflect the actual costs required to achieve their project goals. A maximum of ten (10) projects will be funded.

To find out more about Grand Challenges Nigeria, the launch event, and the RFP, please go to <https://grandchallengesnigeria.org/> or any of our social media channels.

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## Appreciation

**GCNg/NSN Governing Board:** We must extend our very special and heartfelt appreciation to the noble members of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria who midwived this laudable project. Over a remarkable period of nine months, your unwavering commitment, collaborative spirit, and relentless efforts contributed to the take off this initiative.

Most especially, we deeply appreciate the leadership and dedication of the immediate past NSN President, Prof Wasiu A.O. Afolabi under whose tenure GCNg came into being. We are also very grateful to all the other members

of the NSN Governing Board members who include (from left to right, below):

- Prof Salisu Abubakar
- Dr Oluwaseun Ariyo
- Prof Bartholomew I.C. Brai
- Prof Folake Samuel
- Prof Wasiu A.O. Afolabi
- Mrs Foluso Babasola
- Dr Charles Nkwoala

Your synergy with the GCNg technical lead and the GCNg team has exemplified the power of teamwork and a shared vision, the fruit of what is being celebrated today.



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## GCNg Team (staff):

At the heart of this success lies an exceptional engine room—a team of three remarkable individuals led by Godwin Bamsa Abiodun. The team include:

Godwin Bamsa- Senior program manager

Dotun Owolabi- Technical and Innovation manager

Aminat Ajisegiri- Financial and Procurement manager

We recognize their dedication, hard work, and ingenuity which were pivotal in turning this vision into reality. Their unwavering commitment and collaborative efforts ensured that every detail of the project was executed with excellence, culminating in this remarkable achievement.



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## GCNg Advisory Board:

Grand Challenges Nigeria has been joined in partnership by several organizations, which are now represented on the advisory board. We express our deepest gratitude to the members of the advisory board, whose invaluable guidance and dedication are pivotal to the success of GC Nigeria's mission.



Members of the GCNg Advisory board (and attending guests) in a group photo.

Top row, from left to right:

1. Dr Moses Aloba, Science for Africa and Grand Challenges Africa (Guest)
2. Dr Francis Aminu, Aliko Dangote Foundation
3. Prof Lateef Sanni, Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute
4. Prof Ignatius Onimawo, Chairman, NSN Body of Fellows
5. Dr Fatu Badiene, Science for Africa and Grand Challenges Africa (Guest)
6. Godwin Bamsa, Programme Manager, Grand Challenges Nigeria
7. Chimdindu Onwudiegwu, Dalberg Global Advisors
8. Dr Victor Ajieroh, Member, Fellow, NSN (Absent with apologies)

Bottom row, from left to right:

1. Professor Bartholomew Brai, Past NSN President
2. Prof Olaoluwa Akinwale, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research
3. Mr. Adeyemi Adebayo, Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science & Technology
4. Mrs Uju Vanstasia, Office of the Vice President
5. Prof Salisu Abubakar, President, NSN
6. Prof Wasiu Afolabi, Immediate Past President, NSN
7. Prof Folake Samuel, Programme Director & Technical Lead, Grand Challenges Nigeria
8. Dr James Oloyede, FHI360

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## Quotes from the GCNigeria launch event:

“At the heart of this project is our commitment to ensuring that the solutions we develop are inclusive and equitable, bringing together public and private sectors, academia, community stakeholders, and other key players. We look forward to working closely with the community of Grand Challenges national programs in Africa including GC South Africa, GC Rwanda, GC Ethiopia, the pan-Africa GC program, and other GC programs around the world to support our community of grantees and accelerate scientific progress.

**Professor Salisu Maiwada Abubakar, FNSN, President, Nutrition Society of Nigeria**

“We recognise that incremental change is not enough; Nigeria requires transformative, science-driven solutions capable of achieving meaningful impact at scale. We aim to create opportunities for locally grounded, multidisciplinary solutions, ensuring that investments not only address critical gaps but also build upon and amplify the successes of ongoing initiatives.” **Professor Folake Samuel, FNSN, FPMA-UK, Program Director and Technical Lead, Grand Challenges Nigeria.**

“Today, we will begin setting our agenda and requesting proposals from our best and brightest minds. I invite you to forge forward by addressing the issues at their hardest to benefit the lives of the greatest number of our citizens.” **His Highness, Muhammad Sanusi II, CON, PhD (London), Emir of Kano and Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria.**

“I am excited about the opportunities unlocked by the launch of Grand Challenges Nigeria. A thriving ecosystem in health, nutrition, and food systems is not just ideal but necessary for Nigeria’s progress. Collaborating with partners who are committed to driving innovation in these critical areas gives us the chance to secure a healthier, more equitable future for all Nigerians.” **Mrs Uju Vanstasia Anwukah, Special Assistant to the President on Public Health**



“We are thrilled to welcome Grand Challenges Nigeria into the global and African network,”

**Prof Tom Kariuki, CEO of Science for Africa Foundation.**



“Grand Challenges Nigeria is more than a response to problems; it is an avenue to promote groundbreaking research, build local expertise, form strategic partnerships, and engage communities in co-creating culturally relevant solutions. At its heart lies a commitment to inclusivity and gender equity, ensuring that marginalised and underserved groups across our nation are not left behind.” **His Excellency, Senator Kashim Shettima GCON, Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

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## Thank You!

We appreciate your time and interest in our newsletter. Your engagement fuels our passion to share updates, insights, and stories that matter.

Together, we're making a difference in NSN!!

Best Regards,  
Professor Folake O. Samuel  
*Program Director and Technical Lead, Grand Challenges Nigeria.*

**Published by the Publicity Team of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria**

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