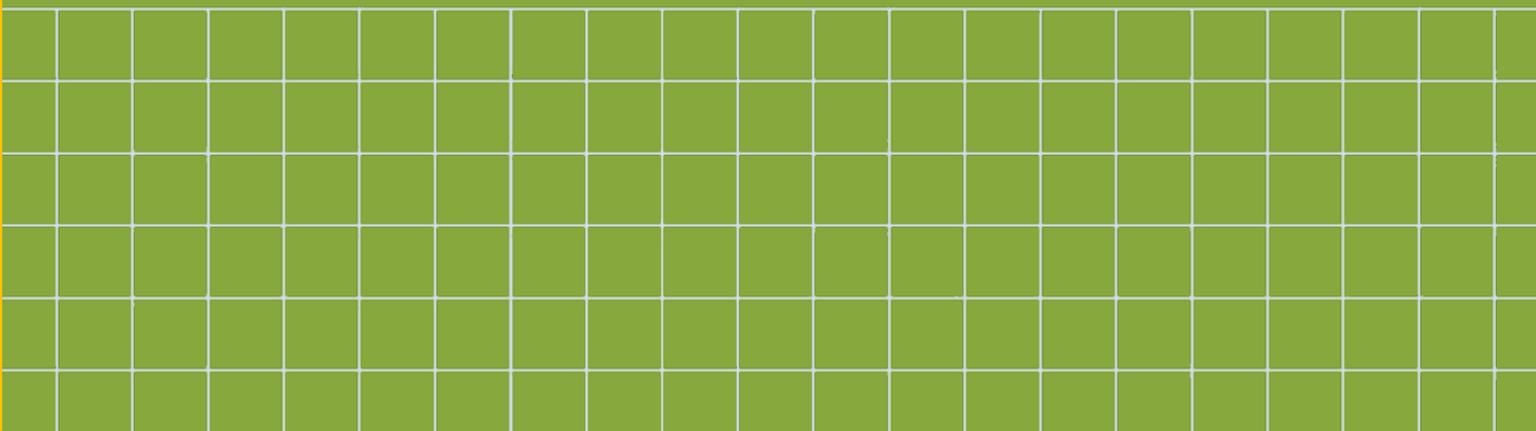




Strengthening health research capacity in Africa

# TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK





Dear Applicant

I am delighted that you are considering applying for a trustee position at the Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF). If you do join us, you will play a key role in saving lives and improving global health by contributing to the development and growth of the next generation of African health researchers in Africa, for Africa and the rest of the World.

Many of the diseases and conditions that affect human health have been cured or overcome as a result of medical research. But there will always be more to do and the current Covid-19 pandemic serves as a timely reminder about the threats we face living in our global community. With continued deforestation, climate change and frequent flights, pandemics can take off from any corner of our Earth. In recent times Ebola and Zika from Africa threatened the lives and economies not only in Africa but the world over.

Significant sums of money have been spent by governments and donors to train MScs and PhDs in the African continent but proportionately less has been spent on postdoctoral researchers – the foundation for developing the next generation of leading researchers from the continent. Coupled with the fact that African governments spend very little on postdocs, a significant number of promising African scientists leave the shores for greener pastures in the North never to return or abandon science to join lucrative international positions. The few who work hard to remain in science need to compete for international funding with significant competition from their counterparts in the North. That is where we step in.

Founded by Professor Tumani Corrah KBE, The Africa Research Excellence Fund is a charity that funds and nurtures the most promising young African health researchers by providing them with stepping-stones to compete and win international funding. We use our donations responsibly and ensure we create the greatest impact where it is most needed.

With the support of the UK's Medical Research Foundation, AREF was established in 2015 as a charitable trust with the Foundation serving as its Corporate Trustee. AREF is now embarking on the next phase in its development, by incorporating as a charitable company with its own Board of Trustees who will have ultimate responsibility for directing the charity, its assets and its activities.

I look forward to welcoming the successful candidates to AREF's Board of Trustees as we continue in pursuing our charitable purpose to promote medical research in Africa by developing the next generation of African health researchers in Africa for Africa and global health.

**For Africa, in Africa, by Africa.**

**Nicholas Lemoine  
Chair Elect of the AREF Board of Trustees**

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## ABOUT US

### Introduction

The Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) works to improve the quality and impact of health research in Sub-Saharan Africa by nurturing African-led research in and for the region. Launched in 2015, our focus is on enabling talented young health researchers to access the skills necessary to become leading scientists in Africa. Most researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa lack the mentors, collaborators and key skills that are essential to winning funding for their own research ideas and becoming research leaders. AREF is addressing a critical career stage for these researchers by providing stepping-stones to competitive international funding.

Professor Tumani Corrah KBE MRG is the founder and Director of AREF. He is Emeritus Director of the UK's MRC Unit, The Gambia; is MRC's first Director for Africa Research Development; and holds senior advisory appointments to several major funders.

### Challenges

More and more African health researchers are achieving PhDs, putting them on the starting block of a research career. The problem remains that, few can access the postdoctoral mentorship, skills training and advanced research networks they need to unlock research funding that will lead eventually to the building of their own teams and earn them a place with the continent's and global scientific leaders. We need to develop a new generation of leading African researchers – working in Africa on Africa's health challenges – and we need to do this urgently given the scale of Africa's health challenges including emerging infections and the rapid increase of non-communicable diseases.

### AREF's Programmes

AREF programmes are open to individuals from all Sub-Saharan countries. Our fellowship placements are in Europe and South Africa. We run two programmes:

Our **Competitive Award Programmes** enables emerging African researchers to undertake a 3-9-month placement at a centre of research excellence in Europe (including the UK) or Africa in order to develop and explore their own ideas, develop specialist & transferable skills, extend their research relationships and successfully gain further research funding. Each Fellow undertakes a personal development programme during the placement in which they access short courses and hands-on training in advanced research skills; winning funding, managing research projects and get new opportunities for collaboration and mentorship.

Our **Academy Programme** provides training and development programmes, such as our Grant-writing workshops and the newly launched **Excell** leadership development programme. The programmes aim to enable our partner Institutions in Africa and the researchers they nominate to the Programme to develop and practice key skills for managing and leading research. This programme aims to build the confidence of emergent researchers in determining their own career intentions and have more influence within their institutions.

### Achievements to date

In its first five years, AREF has achieved the following **outputs**:

- **31** health researchers have or will benefit from our AREF Research Development Fellowship
- **142** health-researchers from across sub-Saharan Africa have been trained through our *Essential Grant writing Skills Workshops*, and many are winning research grants.

- **20** emergent researchers from six African universities and research institutions have just completed the *Excell-1 Researcher & Leadership Development Programme*. They are reporting outcomes in terms of increased confidence, collaboration, productivity and impact.
- **10** scientists have similarly completed AREF's first *Towards Leadership* programme.
- Our beneficiaries have won over £4.7 millions of research funds

## Where we work

Highlighted spots in the map shows the numbers of AREF beneficiaries and their respective countries. Our target is to attract fellows from all over Sub-Saharan Africa.



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# TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

## ROLE PURPOSE

As a member of the Board of Trustees, you will provide strategic leadership and oversight for the Africa Research Excellence Fund as it seeks to fulfil its charitable objects. You will ensure the Fund operates in accordance with its governing document and meets its legal and regulatory requirements.

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## ABOUT US

### Why the role is important to us

Our trustees will be jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the Africa Research Excellence Fund, its financial health, probity of its activities, and for setting and overseeing the delivery of the organisation's aims and objectives.

The Charity Commission's Guidance *'The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do'* identifies the main duties of a trustee as to:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
- Comply with their charity's governing document and the law.
- Act in the charity's best interests.
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly.
- Act with reasonable care and skill.
- Ensure the charity is accountable.

In addition to being a registered charity, AREF is in the process of being registered as a company limited by guarantee and, as such, our trustees will also be appointed as its company directors.

### What you will do

As a trustee, you will:

- Ensure that the Africa Research Excellence Fund pursues its stated charitable objects by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensure the Africa Research Excellence Fund functions within all applicable legal and regulatory requirements and in line with its governing document, continually striving for best practice in governance.
- Maintain the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the Africa Research Excellence Fund.
- Promote and develop the Africa Research Excellence Fund in order for it to grow and maintain its public benefit and recognise the situation when it may be more appropriate to wind the charity up where there is no longer a need to provide the services it does or because the charitable objects are no longer relevant to contemporary social situations.
- Take appropriate professional advice in all matters where there may be a material risk to the Africa Research Excellence Fund, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Africa Research Excellence Fund and its resources, striving for best practice in governance.
- Ensure that robust systems are in place for internal financial control and the protection of the Africa Research Excellence Fund's funds and assets.

- Maintain oversight of the work of the Executive, including both supporting and holding to account through appropriate challenging.
- Ensure the Africa Research Excellence Fund has the proper arrangements in place for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive.
- Safeguard the good name and values of the Africa Research Excellence Fund.
- Sit on sub-committees or panels, as required.

All trustees should be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual trustee in any particular aspect of the governance of the Africa Research Excellence Fund. For example, all trustees should be able to read the financial accounts to a level that they can ask questions and comprehend answers of a general nature.

Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings. A minimum of four board meetings will be held per year and will take place in Central London and by videoconference. Additionally, Trustees are also asked to attend a strategic planning day and occasional evening events.

## ABOUT YOU

### Who you are

You possess:

- A willingness to commit to the Africa Research Excellence Fund, and to devote the necessary time and effort (approximately six days annually, including possible evening events and meeting preparation time).
- Strategic vision.
- Sound, independent judgment and a willingness to speak your mind.
- An ability to think creatively.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- An ability to work effectively as a member of the team.
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

### What you will bring to the role

You will have:

- Strategic leadership and management experience.
- An understanding of the UK charity sector.
- Sympathy for the issues of public good and donor wishes in funding medical research.
- Excellent networking skills, influencing and communicating skills.
- Strong links to Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Board-level management experience in one of the following areas:
  - Finance
  - Trading
  - Fundraising
  - Communications
  - Providing research funding for African science

You will be:

- Able to provide direction and vision to the Africa Research Excellence Fund and its staff.
- Able to provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to our Executive team.
- Over the age of 18.

### **Disqualification**

Trustees must not be disqualified from acting as a trustee. You must not:

- Have an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty (such as fraud).
- Be bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement (e.g. an Individual Voluntary Arrangement).
- Have been removed as a company director or a charity trustee because of wrongdoing.
- Have an unspent conviction for:
  - Specified terrorism offences.
  - A specified money laundering offence.
  - The offence of contravening a Charity Commission Order or Direction.
  - Offences of misconduct in public office, perjury, or perverting the course of justice.
  - For aiding, attempting or abetting the above offences.
- Be on the sex offenders register.
- Have an unspent sanction for contempt of Court.
- Have disobeyed a Commission Order.
- Be a designated person (under specific anti-terrorist legislation).

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## KEY DATES

Closing date	15 January 2021 (09:00 GMT)
Interviews	9 & 11 February 2021
Expected commencement date	1 April 2021