

Standard Operating Procedures for Pre-qualification and Selection of CaSE Track 3 Fellowship Hosts

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CaSE	Capacity Strengthening Engagement and Mentorship
GN	Global North
GS	Global South
MATRIX	Microbicide R&D to Advance HIV Prevention Technologies through Responsive Innovation and eXcellence
PD	Product developer
RFA	Request for applications
RFI	Research Fairness Initiative
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SOW	Scope of work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe the process for developing partnerships with Global South (GS) or Global North (GN) organisations for hosting CaSE scholars.

It provides a framework for recruiting institutions and mentors for the MATRIX Capacity Strengthening and Engagement (CaSE) Fellowship Programme.

- It describes the eligibility requirements for potential host-institutions that engage with the CaSE Fellowship Programme.
- It outlines the approval process for accepting selected institutions as host institutions.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 MATRIX

MATRIX (Microbicide R&D to Advance HIV Prevention Technologies through Responsive Innovation and eXcellence) is led (designated “the Prime”) by Magee-Women’s Research Institute, Pittsburgh, USA and Wits RHI, University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. MATRIX’s scientific and operational priorities include equitable leadership and representation by stakeholders in East and southern Africa as well as the US, to advance products that meet the diverse HIV prevention needs of adolescent girls and young women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and female sex workers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) who face a disproportionate burden of HIV.

MATRIX is currently partnered with four Product Developers (PDs) working on six novel products with HIV prevention indications and/or STIs and pregnancy at various stages of development.

2.2 CaSE

The CaSE (Capacity Strengthening, Engagement and Mentorship) Fellowship Programme aims to strengthen technical skills in early and mid-level career scientists in SSA to enhance local capacity for HIV-prevention product development. CaSE is a part of MATRIX, a 5-year USAID-funded cooperative agreement aimed to develop a range of feasible products to meet the unmet needs of women at risk of HIV. Specifically, the focus of the CaSE Fellowship Programme is to instill and expand the necessary expertise and knowledge in scientists highly interested in HIV prevention product development, primarily in the pre-formulation, formulation, and scale up phases of the product development pathway.

The CaSE Fellowship Programme aims to contribute to building the next-generation of African product developers with expertise in the development of novel HIV-prevention drug delivery formulation technologies. In addition to building skills in product development, the Fellowship will provide guided mentorship with a range of experts from both the Global South and Global North.

The CaSE leadership team is made up of representatives from the Aurum Institute (Johannesburg, South Africa), the Kenyan Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) (Nairobi, Kenya), the Public Health Institute (PHI) (California, USA), University of Alabama, Birmingham (UAB) (Alabama, USA), and the Harare Health and Research Consortium (HHRC) (Harare, Zimbabwe).

CaSE is currently collaborating with the University of Wisconsin, Madison, North West University, and HIV-prevention PDs and technical advisors to develop the CaSE Fellowship Programme to provide learning experiences, hands on training, and mentorship opportunities.

CaSE offers capacity strengthening by providing a multi-tiered program of training and mentorship opportunities. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the CaSE Fellowship tracks. This specific SOP provides guidance for selection of host institutions for Track 3 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Overview of CASE Fellowship Tracks

2.3 Rationale

Hosting partners will have experience training and mentoring early- and mid-career African scientists in product development relevant to product development for HIV-prevention. This SOP provides guidance for the recruitment of, requirements, and approval process for potential host-institutions to ensure fairness in the selection of institutions. The criteria for selection is based on relevant expertise and mentorship experience and infrastructure and capacity to ensure the success of the CaSE programme.

3.0 CASE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

This section outlines the operational procedures for the selection of host institutions for the CaSE Fellowship Programme.

3.1 Framework for Selecting Institution Hosts for CASE Fellowship

CASE partners will oversee the process (Figure 1) of selecting host institutions for the CaSE Fellowship Programme in the Global South and Global North, which are guided by the governing principles of the Research Fairness Initiative (RFI; <https://rfi.cohred.org/rfi-guides/>). This process is done in collaboration with frequent input from colleagues at the Prime and USAID.

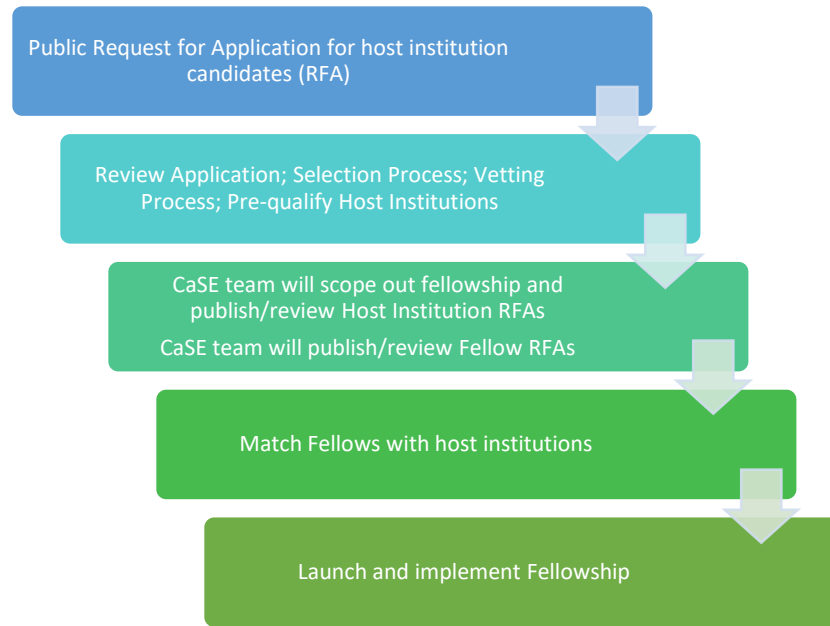


Figure 2: Framework for pre-qualifying Host Institution

This process has been put in place to ensure timely roll out of CaSE Track 3 Fellowship throughout the life span of the MATRIX project. Updates will be made to this SOP as needed.

This is a two-step process:

- 1) The pre-qualification process that includes vetting of applicants and potential host institutions
- 2) Selection of fellows and matching fellows with Host Institutions for specific Fellowships.

3.2 Pre-qualification Host Institutions

The pre-qualification process is a once-off activity in the lifespan of the project. But the matching process will be done for every fellowship. The process for pre-qualifying host institutions is described in detail in Table 1 and Figure 2 below:

Table 1. Pre-qualification of Host Institutions

PRE-QUALIFICATION PROCESS	
Step 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) CaSE will publish an RFA for institutions in the Global South and Global North to apply to. b) CaSE team will review applications and select qualifying institutions to host fellows based on capacity and capabilities aligned with fellowship goals and scope.

	<p>c) CaSE Team will shortlist qualifying institutions and undertake a vetting process to pre-qualify the institutions. Vetting process outlined below (Refer to Section 3.1)</p> <p>d) A list of selected institutions will be sent to the Prime for ratification, then USAID approval will be sought.</p>
Step 2	An approved list (Prime and USAID approved) of pre-qualified institutions will be entered in a database with all relevant information. Letters confirming pre-qualification will be sent to the selected institutions.
MATCHING PROCESS	
Step 3	On annual basis, CaSE will develop a work plan that will be approved by the PRIME and USAID for implementation.
Step 4	<p>As part of the work plan implementation, CaSE will develop Request for Applications (RFA) as well as scope of work (SOW) for the Track 3 fellowship.</p> <p>Once the selection process for candidates is concluded, the CaSE team will undertake a matching process i.e., matching selected fellows with host institutions.</p> <p>The matching process will serve to optimize fellowship outcomes by ensuring that fellows are placed in the most suitable institutions, under mentors whose focus align with their personal development goals.</p> <p>Apart from reviewing institutional capacity against the fellow's goals, Product Developers from the host institutions will be actively involved in the interview and selection process of the fellows.</p>
Step 5	Applications will be reviewed by the CaSE team, sent to the PRIME for approval and USAID for ratification. Once USAID ratifies selection of host institutions for a specific fellowship programme, the contracting process will begin. The CaSE team will reach out to establish a SOW and budget with the host-institution.
Step 6	CaSE will work closely with MATRIX PDs to select qualifying institutions.
<p>The process for recruiting Fellows will be done by soliciting application through a public RFA. Once fellows as well as host institutions are selected, the fellowship will be rolled out accordingly.</p>	

3.3 Vetting potential Host Institutions

A vetting process will be undertaken to ensure alignment between the CaSE fellowship program objectives and host institution capacity. A vetting package will be sent to the host institution with a list of questions on product development capacity. In addition, members of the CaSE team will arrange a site visit with each potential institution leadership and mentors.

The following considerations will be taken into account for the vetting process:

Mentoring

Institutions will be required to provide the following information about mentorship capacity:

- ☐ A description of any particular institutional philosophy or style of mentorship
- ☐ Anticipated structure of mentoring that will be provided to new mentee (hours per week, types of interactions, connections to mentoring networks)
- ☐ Description of previous and current trainees (number, background) including:
 - ☐ Description of activities and projects of a selection of ~5 current/recent trainees, to include main outputs from each project and resulting awards or accomplishments
 - ☐ Description of trainee experience at your institute
 - What type of training provided under your mentorship?
 - Current position/occupation of mentee
 - How many are currently in Product Development?
 - How many are in academic positions as lecturers?
 - Do they have ties to research institutions?
- ☐ Capacity to host Fellows, availability of space and resources
- ☐ CVs of potential lead mentors
- ☐ Contact details of 2 – 3 professional referees
- ☐ Contact details of 3 – 5 students/ post docs supervised.
- ☐ A list of relevant publications and patents

Laboratory Capacity/Resources

- ☐ Description of current projects and objectives of your lab/centre
- ☐ Description of available equipment and instrumentation for product development
 - ☐ Requirements for reagents, availability of reagents, associated costs for equipment use
- ☐ Description of process for trainees to be trained on and use equipment.
- ☐ Description of the product development labs, institutions, etc. that you collaborate with
- ☐ Description of lab's process for vetting trainee projects

Logistical and administrative support for trainees

- ☐ Ability to help trainee find housing, day-to-day transport to lab, etc.
- ☐ Ability to provide trainee with office space and access to office needs (internet, printing, computing, etc.)

- ☐ Ability to provide visa application assistance for trainee

Terms of engagement/ MOU

- ☐ Number of current partnerships with other institutions and industries
- ☐ Description of any particular style or philosophy of engagement with external partners
- ☐ Anticipated structure of engagement with regards to intellectual property and branding of any innovations.

The process for vetting potential host institutions is summarised in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Vetting Potential Host Institutions

Step 1	<p>Initial outreach interview: Once a potential institution has been identified by CaSE, the team will reach out for an initial interview. This interview is to give a brief overview of MATRIX, CaSE, and the Fellowship Programme as well as gain an understanding of the potential host-institution's goals, experience hosting/mentoring, and current projects.</p> <p>The potential host institution will be given an overview of MATRIX and CaSE expectations, the agreement and budgeting process, and any other supporting documents and materials on the CaSE Programme.</p>
Step 2	<p>Vetting : Once an institution has confirmed interest in hosting, CASE team will reach out to the and request the following as the initial step for the vetting process.</p> <p>Vetting will be done in 2 levels i.e. Institutional and Mentor.</p> <p>The following will be requested for institutional vetting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability/Capacity statement from the host lab • Table of capacity/infrastructure and dosage forms (Appendix 4) <p>The following will be requested to review lead mentors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum vitae of the lead proposed mentors • 2 – 3 professional Referees • Mentorship references: Contact details of 3 – 5 students/ post docs supervised (<i>see Appendix 2 for template guide/questions</i>) • A list of relevant publications and patents
Step 3	<p>Site visit: Once vetting package is complete or in the process of completion, CaSE team members will arrange a site visit to conduct a physical assessment of the institutions. A Checklist for this is appended</p>

Step 4	Background Checks: The case team will conduct background checks on lead mentors by soliciting professional references as well as well prior mentee references
Step 5	Assessment: Once all forms have been submitted, site visit conducted, Case team members and other relevant individuals will review the materials and make assessment of the hosting institution.
Step 6	<p>Selection: Based on information solicited from all the above processes, CaSE team will work closely with MATRIX PDs to assess the institutions. The involvement of PDs will help to ensure that we are selection relevant institutions.</p> <p>CaSE put together an assessment report and share with the Prime, along with recommendations for selection or non-selection.</p>
Step 7	<p>Pre-Qualification: Once the institution has been selected for pre-qualification, a letter of confirmation will be sent to the institution. They will be entered into a host institution database along with all relevant records and documentation. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the institution • CVs of lead mentors with list of publications • References • Table of capacity and infrastructure of institution (including dosage forms, equipment, mentors, and other resources)

3.4 Selection of Host Institutions

While the process for pre-qualifying host institutions will be facilitated by the CaSE team (Including publishing the RFA, and reviewing applications thereof) selection of the host institutions will be done jointly with the PRIME (and USAID if needed). Figure 3, below, outlines the selection process.

1. CaSE will publish the public RFA (Appendix 3)
2. CaSE will review and process applications received
3. Qualifying applications based on the vetting process will be sent to PRIME for review.
4. PRIME and USAID will ratify the selection of host institutions.
5. CaSE will set up a database of prequalified host institutions

CaSE is committed to promoting diversity within its programs, recognizing the scientific achievements of our diverse membership, and fostering career development and advancement for individuals from underrepresented groups. Therefore in selecting Host Institutions and mentors for the fellowship program, CaSE will prioritize institutions and mentors of all backgrounds (e.g., gender, geographic location, etc.).

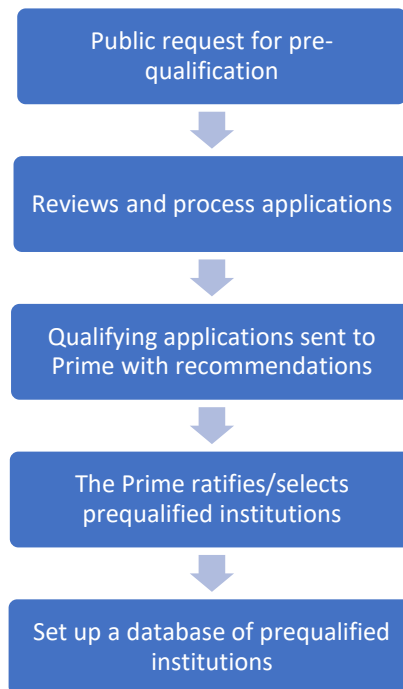


Figure 3. Pre-qualification of Host Institutions

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND ROLL OUT OF CaSE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

The process for rolling out the CaSE (Track 3) fellowship and selecting CaSE fellows will be facilitated by the CaSE team, but final approval regarding the various fellowship programmes (including selection of Host Institutions to host fellows and ratifying outputs/deliverables) will be done by the PRIME and/or USAID.

5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTING HOST INSTITUTIONS

The process of prequalifying and selecting host institutions for the CaSE Fellowship Programme will observe and ensure the following:

- ❖ Alignment of host institutional capacities with the goals and scope of the fellowship
- ❖ Fairness, openness, transparency and accountability (following RFI guidelines)
- ❖ Rapid response to RFAs
- ❖ A competitive qualifying process

6.0 CORE COMPETENCIES FOR the CaSE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

In pre-qualifying host institutions, CaSE team will consider institutions that have the capacity and capabilities in the following listed categories related to Product Development process:

- Scientific Leadership
- Pre-formulation
- Formulation

- Scale up
- Pre-clinical (which may include animal models, safety and toxicology studies)

Product Development Capabilities

- Global North Host institutions should have experience in HIV-prevention product development in alignment with MATRIX goals. STIs and/or contraceptive product development may be considered if there is significant alignment with MATRIX priorities.
- Global South Host institutions need not necessarily have a background in HIV-prevention product development, but should have expertise, technical skills and experience in pharmaceutical drug development process across pre-formulation, formulation, and scale up.

Product Development Capacities

- Laboratory space and equipment for pre-formulation, formulation, and scale up
- Host institutions will fill out a table of capacity and infrastructure, dosage forms and associated equipment which will assist in the development of the Fellows learning plan and appropriately matching the Fellows to mentors and host institutions.

Mentoring Capacity and Track Record

- Host institutions should have at least 1 scientist mentor available
- Mentor to fellow ratio should be no more than 1:2
- Mentors should be able to commit up to 12-20h/month for each Fellow. An outline of expected time commit is outlined below with mentor expectations:
 - Provide laboratory training and oversight, guidance on projects for Fellows (4-8h/month)
 - Hold regular office hours (4-8h/month)
 - Attend regular 3–4-month check-ins on Fellows' learning plans and goals with CaSE, which may include other host mentors and the Fellow's supervisor. (2-4h/month)
- Host institution has a track record of mentees continuing in the field of PD

Research and Innovation Capacities

- Host institutions/departments should have evidence of recent publications and/or patents in the focus areas of MATRIX: pre-formulation, formulation and scale-up

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Checklist for Vetting Potential Host Institutions

Request Package, Questions and Considerations for CaSE Product Development Placement Hosts

To help ensure alignment between the CaSE programme objectives and Fellowship placement sites, below is a list of questions and considerations for potential Product Development Fellowship placement sites. In addition to the items below, members of the CaSE team will arrange to have a site visit with each site and potential mentors should submit their CV to the CaSE team.

Please provide the following:

Mentoring

- ☐ A description of any particular philosophy or style of your mentoring that you would bring to a CaSE fellow.
- ☐ Anticipated structure of mentoring that you are available to give to a new mentee (hours per week, types of interactions, connections to mentoring networks)
- ☐ Description of trainees (number, background) you have worked with in the past and are currently working with, including:
 - ☐ Description of activities and projects of a selection of ~5 current/recent trainees, including main outputs from each project and resulting awards or accomplishments
 - ☐ Description of where former trainees are currently
 - What type of training did they receive under your mentorship?
 - Where are they in the world now and at what institution?
 - How many are in Product Development?
 - How many are in academic positions as lecturers?
 - Do they have ties to research institutions?
- ☐ Your capacity to host Fellows, availability of space and resources
- ☐ CVs of potential lead mentors
- ☐ Contact details of 2 – 3 professional Referees
- ☐ Contact details of 3 – 5 students/ post docs supervised
- ☐ A list of relevant publications and patents

Lab Capacity/Resources

- ☐ Description of current projects and objectives of your lab/centre
- ☐ Description of available equipment and instrumentation for product development
 - ☐ Requirements for reagents, availability of reagents, associated costs for equipment use
- ☐ Description of process for trainees to be trained on and use equipment
- ☐ Description of the product development labs, institutions, etc. that you collaborate with
- ☐ Description of lab's process for vetting trainee projects

Logistical and administrative support for trainees

- ☐ Ability to help trainee find housing, day-to-day transport to lab, etc.

Ability to provide trainee with office space and access to office needs (internet, printing, computing, etc)

Terms of engagement/ MOU

- ☐ Number of current partnerships with other institutions and industries
- ☐ Description of any particular style or philosophy of engagement with external partners
- ☐ Anticipated structure of engagement with regards to intellectual property and branding of any innovations.

Miscellaneous

Please share with us any additional information you feel would be helpful

Appendix 2: Template Questions for Mentorship References from Past Students

1. When and for how long was your placement/engagement with the mentor (Mention Name)?
2. Can you describe what your objectives/learning goals were during this time? Did you achieve your learning goals? Please explain.
3. Do you feel that the mentorship provided was adequate? How much mentorship time did you have on a weekly/monthly basis? Please explain.
4. Do you feel that you gained adequate theoretical knowledge during your placement? Please explain.
5. Do you feel that you gained adequate practical knowledge/hands-on training during your placement? Please explain.
6. Did you feel adequately supported on your project(s)? Please explain.
7. Did you have all the equipment/reagents etc. that you needed? Please explain.
8. What is your opinion on the overall quality of your placement and experience with this mentor/institution?
9. Did your placement result in any scientific publication? Please list relevant publication/s
10. Did your placement result in any innovation? Please list any patent/s and copyright/s
11. In what way do you think the institution could improve? What would you suggest for the Institution to strengthen support for Product Development?

Appendix 3: Request for Applications for Pre-Qualification of CaSE Host Institutions

Introduction

The purpose of this call for Request for Applications (RFA) is to set up a short list of Institutions with relevant capacity (Facilities, skills and expertise) to host fellows for the CaSE HIV Prevention Product Development Fellowship Programme.

Background

The MATRIX Capacity Strengthening, Engagement, and Mentorship (CaSE) team seeks applications from Institutions (Academic and Industry) focused on pharmaceutical product development to host, train and mentor fellows who will be enrolled in the CaSE HIV prevention Fellowship Programme that aims to build capacity in HIV prevention and Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) on the African continent. Biomedical (pharmaceutical) product development is a lengthy and complex process of systematic steps required to bring a product to the market. It is defined as the full life cycle of product development including early drug discovery, pre-formulation and formulation development, pre-clinical animal testing phase, clinical trials, regulatory approval, manufacturing and launch, and post-market safety monitoring. **MATRIX supports research and development of novel biomedical HIV prevention products that are in the pre-clinical and early clinical development phases.**

The CaSE Fellowship Programme aims to contribute to building the next-generation of African product developers with expertise in the development of novel HIV prevention drug delivery formulation technologies. The primary focus of the fellowship is the **pre-formulation, formulation and scale-up** phases of product development.

The host institutions will support the CaSE fellowship through skills building in product development; provide guided mentorship across the product development spectrum for the development of funding applications and results dissemination.

CaSE invites qualifying institutions who are interested to support this exciting ‘game-changing’ multi-country capacity building initiative and contribute to building a crop of researchers and scientists specialized in early-stage product development on the African continent.

Applications are open to institutions with relevant facilities and expertise that would enable an environment for learning and growth in pharmaceutical sciences, and a specific dedication to advancing product development for HIV prevention and MPTs.

Institutions applying for this opportunity must have experience training and mentoring emerging scientists in product development for HIV, contraception, STI prevention and other diseases.

About CaSE and MATRIX

The [CaSE Fellowship Programme](https://matrix4prevention.org) is sponsored by the Microbicide R&D to Advance HIV Prevention Technologies through Responsive Innovation and eXcellence (MATRIX) Consortium with funding through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). MATRIX is designed to expedite research and development of products for the prevention of HIV in women (<https://matrix4prevention.org>). MATRIX is led (designated “the Prime”) by Magee-Women’s Research Institute, Pittsburgh, USA and Wits RHI, University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. MATRIX’s scientific and operational priorities include equitable leadership and representation by stakeholders in East and southern Africa as well as the US, to advance products that meet the diverse HIV prevention needs of adolescent girls and young women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and female sex workers in sub-Saharan Africa who face a disproportionate burden of HIV.

The CaSE Programme focuses on enhancing product development skills from post-drug discovery through late-stage Phase 1 to support HIV-prevention product development in east and southern Africa. The vision for impact by the CaSE Fellowship Programme includes increasing end-user product choice through products developed hand-in-hand with African researchers, policy makers, and regulatory authorities. Representatives from the Aurum Institute (Johannesburg, South Africa), the Kenyan Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) (Nairobi, Kenya), the Public Health Institute (PHI) (California, USA), the MATRIX Consortium, and the hosting research laboratories will oversee the selection and interview process of the Fellows.

Scope of Service

The MATRIX Capacity Strengthening, Engagement, and Mentorship (CaSE) team is soliciting applications from qualified institutions who wish to be considered as host institutions for CaSE fellows. Specifically, CaSE is looking to identify host institutions for Components 2, 3, and 4 who have the capacity and experience to host and mentor fellows.

The current structure of the CaSE Fellowship Programme includes the following components:

Component 1: E-learning Course [1 month]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-paced, 40h e-learning course on the basics of theoretical product development with a focus on HIV prevention. • To be completed before starting Component 2
Component 2: Global South placement [3 months]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on practical work in Global South lab theoretical learning with mentorship
Component 3: US-based placement [6 months]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on practical work in the lab with MATRIX PDs, specifically on HIV prevention products
Component 4: Return to Global South placement [14 months]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on practical work in Global South lab for continued learning and application of new skills gained in the US-based placement
Component 5: Re-entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued CaSE Mentorship • Proposal writing • Opportunity to apply for small project funding

Component 1: Online product development coursework for approximately 40 hours to build greater theoretical understanding of product development and components specific to the fellow's interest.

Component 2: A 3-month placement in a partner laboratory in South Africa, Kenya, or Zimbabwe for practical hands-on- training and additional theoretical learning.

Component 3: A short-term 6 month supervised hands-on practical lab training (bench-time) with a US-based product development group.

Component 4: Up to 14-month hands-on supervised lab training at a partner laboratory in South Africa, Kenya, or Zimbabwe

Component 5: Support for re-entry into their home institution with ongoing mentorship from CaSE/MATRIX.

Core Competencies for the CaSE Fellowship Programme

In pre-qualifying host institutions, CaSE team will consider institutions that have the capacity and capabilities in the following listed categories related to Product Development:

- Product Development (pre-formulation, formulation, and scale up)
- Laboratory Expertise
- Scientific Leadership Skills (enhancing ownership of research project, increased opportunity for first and senior author publications for fellows, increased opportunity of research grant applications for fellows)
- Regulatory
- Social Behavioural Research
- Bio-Statistics and Statistical Analysis
- Scientific writing

- Data management

Product Development Capabilities and Capacity

- Host institution need not necessarily have a background in HIV prevention product development, but should have expertise and experience in drug development, pharmaceutical product development in the 3 areas of focus for MATRIX: pre-formulation, formulation, and scale up.
- Host institution must have Laboratory space and equipment for pre-formulation, formulation, and scale up.

Mentoring Capacity and Track Record

- Host institutions should have at least 1 scientist mentor available
- Mentor to fellow ratio should be no more than 1:4
- Mentors should be able to commit 12-20h/month for each Fellow
- Host institution has a track record of mentees continuing in PD

Research and Innovation Capacity

- Host institutions/departments should have evidence of recent publications and/or patents in the focus areas of MATRIX: pre-formulation, formulation and scale-up

Application and submission guidelines

Institutions with relevant expertise, capacity and capabilities wishing to be considered as host institutions for the CaSE Fellowship Programme are requested to submit their applications to the MATRIX CaSE Team.

Applications should include the following information and documents:

- An overview of the institution and capability statement (not more than 3 pages)
- Curriculum vitae of the lead mentors
- 2 – 3 professional Referees
- Mentorship references: Contact details of 3 – 5 students/ post docs supervised (*see appendix 2 for skeleton questions*)
- A list of relevant publications and patents

The Selection Process and Review Criteria

All applications will be initially screened by the CaSE team and ranked. Final selections will be reviewed with the MATRIX Prime partner, MATRIX product developer partners, and USAID.

To ensure alignment between the CaSE programme objectives and Fellowship placement sites, the CaSE team will use the review criteria described below to review applications:

Hosting and Mentoring Capacity

Is the philosophy or style of your mentoring aligned with the CaSE fellowship goal?

Is the structure of mentoring acceptable (hours per week, types of interactions, connections to mentoring networks)

What is the experience of the lead mentors? CVs of potential lead mentors must be provided along with the following information:

- Contact details of 2 – 3 professional Referees
- Contact details of 3 – 5 students/ post docs supervised.
- A list of relevant publications and patents
- Description of activities and projects of a selection of ~5 current/recent trainees, including main outputs from each project and resulting awards or accomplishments
- Description of where key former trainees are currently.
- What type of training did they receive under your mentorship?
- Where are they in the world now and at what institution?
- How many are in Product Development?
- How many are in academic positions as lecturers?
- Do they have ties to research institutions?
- Capacity to host Fellows, availability of space and resources

Lab Capacity/Resources

Are the institution's current projects and objectives of your lab/centre aligned with CaSE fellowship goals?

What dosage forms does the institution work with/have experience working with?

What API does the institution have for the Fellow to use?

Does the institution laboratory have available equipment and instrumentation for product development:

- Requirements for reagents, availability of reagents, associated costs for equipment use?
- What is the process for trainees to be trained on and use equipment?

Logistical and administrative support for trainees

Ability to help trainee find housing, day-to-day transport to lab, etc.

Ability to provide trainee with office space and access to office needs (internet, printing, computing, etc.)

Terms of engagement/ MOU

Number of current partnerships with other institutions and industries

Description of any particular style or philosophy of engagement with external partners

Anticipated structure of engagement with regards to intellectual property and branding of any innovations.

Disclaimer: This Request for Application (RFA) does not constitute an award commitment by the MATRIX Team, neither does it commit the team to pay any costs incurred in the vetting process.