MISSION

The mission of the AIHA Emerging Economies Microgrant Advisory Group (AG) is to provide a fair, structured, transparent, and consistent mechanism for funding educational and research projects that promote occupational hygiene in economically developing nations.

VISION

The vision of the AG is to expand occupational hygiene awareness and capacity globally in order to reduce the risk of injury, illness, and fatality to workers in nations with the fewest resources.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Established in 2018, the AIHA / International Affairs Committee (IAC) Emerging Economies Microgrant Program subcommittee was created to increase understanding and build capacity for occupational hygiene in developing nations around the world. Microgrants are funded by the Association each year and carry the full support of the AIHA Board; their importance is reflected in the AIHA strategic plan under the domain “Advancement & Dissemination of Knowledge. Refer to the excerpt below:

**AIHA 2022-24 Strategic Plan:** Advancement & Dissemination of Knowledge

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<tr>
<th>Strategic Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<td>3. Disseminate educational, technical, and career resources to targeted audiences in developed and emerging economies through multiple delivery options.</td>
<td>A. Promote both AIHA and allied association new education products and services through multiple channels.</td>
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<td>B. Sustain and grow our flagship conference (AIHce) through incorporating best in class event practices.</td>
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<td>C. Sustain and grow JOEH (our peer-reviewed journal).</td>
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<td>D. Sustain and promote the Synergist family of products.</td>
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<td>E. Leverage the AIHA website, our social media platforms, and allied associations to create awareness and interest.</td>
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<td>F. Through partnerships with global OEHS organizations, promote access to AIHA educational resources.</td>
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<td>G. Support non-profits dedicated to training professionals in developing economies via our annual micro-grants program.</td>
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<td>H. Encourage students to engage in mentoring and career planning using the AIHA suite of education and training tools as a pathway toward the CIH credential.</td>
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In 2022, AIHA changed the subcommittee to the standalone Emerging Economies Microgrant Advisory Group (AG) in order to solidify the program and establish a permanent fund to build upon over time. The approach provides greater stability and a better means to track the organizational history of the program.

GROUP STRUCTURE

Group Members

The AG will be limited to 12 members, sought through periodic open calls to the AIHA membership. All AG members must be AIHA national members throughout their term of service and have a current Conflict of Interest form on file. Members of the IAC will be encouraged to participate. The IAC will designate a liaison to the AG at its annual meeting. AIHA members from other committees may be sought to participate to assist with particular activities or projects. As AG members will be expected to play a significant role in selection of award recipients, individuals who have been associated with projects that have received grant awards in the past year, or who plan on submitting proposals within the next year, are not eligible to serve on the AG.

The AG members will elect officers once per year at the AIHA annual conference or whenever necessary. Officers will rotate through the AG in a four-year cycle with one year each beginning as Secretary, Vice Chair, Chair, and Past Chair. Any treasury functions will be addressed by the Chair.

The AG will hold meetings, at least quarterly, to review protocols and discuss policies. One of these meetings will be at AIHce. Draft meeting minutes will be distributed to the group and posted in an AIHA online library available to all members within 6 weeks of the meeting.

Group Finances

Funding sources typically include contributions allocated as approved by the AIHA Board each November as part of the annual operating budget approval process. Funds will become available for distribution after they are released by the AIHA, typically January 1 of each year. Approved funds will be maintained by the AIHA 501(c)6 entity. AIHA staff will be responsible for providing periodic updates on balance of funds available for disbursement to approved project teams. The AG will be responsible for maintaining awareness of the account balance as to assure a steady source of project funds throughout the year. Annual AIHA financial support will not be rolled over to the following year.

Third party donations from organizations or individuals, designated for the microgrant program, will also be held in the same account. Third party donations will be maintained to be rolled over to following years so the fund may be allowed to grow and remain a steady source.
EMERGING ECONOMY MICROGRANT PROPOSALS

Project Proposal Submission

Educational and research project proposals can be submitted on an ongoing basis via the AIHA Emerging Economies Microgrant Group project proposal webpage portal. AIHA staff will provide submitted proposals to current AG members and reviewed according to the AG proposal review protocol.

Proposal Selection Criterion

The AG will review and recommend the allocation of funds to project proposals according to the following defined set of criteria: A higher score is awarded to those projects that reflect these parameters:

Organization Eligibility—Preference for projects led by non-profit entities, such as charities, non-government, academic, and philanthropic organizations. Corporations and individuals are not excluded from applying, but the benefits to the project recipients should clearly outweigh the benefits to the individual or company providing services.

Stand Alone Project Addressing Primary Prevention Consistent with AIHA’s mission and strategic priorities—Project promotes occupational hygiene through education, research, training, and development.

Development and Promotion of the Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) Profession—Project supports research and development efforts necessary to solve occupational health problems and improve working conditions/environment. Capacity building is evident through education, research, training, and outreach.

Projects Addressing Known or Potential Worker Health Issues—Project demonstrates research on hazardous workplace exposures, outcomes, and emerging issues of control methods to minimize associated workplace risks. It may address any emerging or ongoing concerns related to occupational health and safety.

Requested Support Does Not Exceed $3,500 per Project—Project that can achieve its goals with smaller overall budgets, and still make significant impacts in regions of greatest need.

Adequately Describes Needs to Make Project Viable and Successful—Project has a high likelihood of achieving its stated objectives within the required project timeframe limits (one year from funding).

Sources of Proposal Support, Technical Assistance, and Collaboration—Project describes how it may fit into a larger picture of regional or host country development through other support and organizations.
**Ability to Improve Public and Environmental Health, Achieve Results, Feasibility, Practicality**—Whether through prior AIHA microgrant projects or other means, a project or sponsoring organization can show past experience and success in goal-oriented projects.

**Advisory Group Proposal Review**

All AG members must play an active role in the ongoing review of microgrant proposals. The AG will develop and follow protocols for review and allocation recommendation of project proposals received through the open AIHA Microgrant submission portal at the direction and request of the AG Chair. AG members will be required to review protocols and attend orientation and training sessions prior to beginning their review assignments.

AG members will review proposals assigned to them according to the AIHA / Emerging Economies Microgrant Advisory Group Submission Review Protocol. If they encounter a difficulty that may warrant a change to the protocol, they will contact the AG Chair, who will develop a temporary waiver, and propose future changes to the protocol for consideration by the entire AG.

Project proposals will be received via the online portal continuously. As projects come in, they will be forwarded to select AG members to review, select, and forward their responses back to the Chair within one month of receipt. Each reviewer will rate the project objectively and recommend a funding allocation. Reviewers will also provide a short (<200 words) text description for their funding rationale approval or rejection. The AG Chair will consolidate recommendations from reviewers as they come in for each project. The AG Chair will submit project selections and funding amounts to the AG Officers for review and approval every two months. This review may include a meeting with the relevant reviewers to provide clarification and discussion of their scoring and rationale of the submitted proposals. The AG Officers will review the funding allocations and rationales, compare the requested funds to the funds available in the AG finance account, and make a final determination regarding funding before submitting recommendations to the AIHA for award and fund distribution.

**Advisory Group Project Tracking and Reporting Subgroup**

Members of the AG will form a Project Tracking and Reporting Subgroup to work with AIHA staff in creating a database of funded projects to follow. This subgroup is responsible for contacting the grant awardees, obtaining status reports and example documents (e.g., written reports, timelines, or photos of sponsored activities) for the purpose of reporting to the AG, the AIHA Board, and the AIHA membership. The subgroup will develop outreach documents, such as Synergist articles, Quick Take announcements, webinars, and AIHce sessions. On a quarterly basis, one month prior to the regularly scheduled AIHA Board meetings, the subgroup will work with the AG Chair to consolidate a short report regarding the status of annual project proposal review, designation of awards and fund amounts, status of past and recently funded projects, annual funds remaining in the account, and any other updates on the Microgrant program.