

## Healthcare Technologies Grand Challenges Networks*Plus*

Call type: Invitation for proposals

Closing date: 06 October 2015

Related themes: Healthcare Technologies, Digital Economy, Engineering, ICT, Manufacturing the Future, Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences

### Summary

The Healthcare Technologies Theme has recently announced a new long term strategy (<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/themes/healthcaretechnologies/strategy/>). To support this challenge led approach EPSRC invites applications for Network*Plus* proposals that seek to establish new research communities around one of the Healthcare Technologies Grand Challenges of:

- Developing Future Therapies
- Frontiers of Physical Intervention
- Optimising Treatment
- Transforming Community Health and Care

Through Network*Plus* we aim to support networking activities that will identify research strategies and opportunities for addressing our challenges, as well as building new collaborations across disciplines and organisations. EPSRC will kick start these new research strategies by supporting preliminary or feasibility style research as part of the awards. Up to £5 million will be available to fund a balanced portfolio of awards across the four challenge areas; we anticipate funding approx. eight networks. Networks are intended to be UK-wide and must have representation from several disciplines and institutions. It is essential that user engagement is considered in the wider network membership. Each proposal must explain the fit to the chosen challenge area and demonstrate evidence of how they will connect with on-going excellent research in the UK to grow and develop the network. Peer review for this call will consist of a multi-stage process. Applicants should submit an **Intention to Submit by 08 September 2015**; those who have not submitted an intention to submit will be ineligible for this call. The closing time and date for full proposals is **16:00 on 06 October 2015**.

### Background

In March 2015, following extensive engagement with the research and user communities, the EPSRC Healthcare Technologies theme published a new long

term strategy

(<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/themes/healthcaretechnologies/strategy/>). The strategy has three elements which form an interconnected matrix consisting of four grand challenges, six cross-cutting capabilities and an impact and translation toolkit. Future activities undertaken by the theme will have their scientific focus framed by the grand challenges and the capabilities required to deliver them.

To support this challenge led approach EPSRC will establish a number of new challenge driven research communities focused around addressing one of the Healthcare Technologies grand challenges:

- Developing Future Therapies
- Frontiers of Physical Intervention
- Optimising Treatment
- Transforming Community Health and Care

Building new communities in each of these challenge areas will allow the UK research community to develop new ways of working and will also enable the community to respond to future Healthcare Technologies funding activities. Proposals for this call must be for new networks, existing networks can not apply for additional funding. There will be a related activity for the existing NIHR HTC Partnership Awards to apply for additional *Plus* funding, this will be assessed alongside the proposals for new Healthcare Technologies Grand Challenge Networks*Plus*. The relevant PIs will be contacted separately with further details. We would not expect Networks*Plus* proposals to overlap significantly with the EPSRC NIHR HTC Partnership Awards.

Network*Plus* proposals should aim to network relevant communities to further scope the challenge; this should be inclusive of researchers in the community outside of the original network. It is recognised that this would also include expertise outside the engineering and physical sciences areas but this should not form the majority. EPSRC recognises that social and economic impact is delivered by diverse stakeholders such as business, policymakers, charities, healthcare professionals and others, and that it is not the primary role of the research community. We therefore encourage the inclusion of a diverse range of stakeholders to maximise the impact of research.

The aims of the Network*Plus* awards are to:

- Bring together experts from across all relevant research areas, with particular focus on those in engineering and physical sciences.
- Bring focus to the relevant challenge area and identify new research strategies and opportunities for addressing the challenge.
- Engage with interested users of research, including business, clinicians, patient groups and policy makers, to shape future research directions.
- Identify and address the barriers to achieving the challenge.
- Initiate preliminary or feasibility research to tackle the challenge.

- To be collaborative rather than competitive in nature and work together where appropriate (e.g. joint events).

For more information about EPSRC's portfolio and strategies, see our website:  
<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/>

For details of current EPSRC NIHR HTC Partnership Awards see our website:  
<http://gow.epsrc.ac.uk/NGBOViewPanel.aspx?PanelId=1-10LVUD>

## Funding available

Up to £5M is available to support approx. eight NetworkPlus awards. We aim to fund a balanced portfolio of awards aligning to all four healthcare grand challenges.

Awards will be made for between 36-48 months duration. This is to ensure the funding for feasibility studies can be allocated and spent during the lifetime of the award.

Funding is intended to cover the operating and supporting costs of the NetworkPlus as well as the feasibility style studies and a full justification of resources will be required. Requests for funding may include:

**Investigators' salaries** - The Principal Investigator (PI) and up to four Co-Investigators (Co-Is) can request funds to cover their salary costs for the time spent on setting up and managing the NetworkPlus. Time spent by the PI and Co-Is on the co-ordination of the NetworkPlus should be reasonable and is not expected to form the majority of the cost of the proposal. The salary costs of NetworkPlus participants should not be included in the proposal and we would not expect these individuals to be Co-Investigators.

**Travel and subsistence** - Travel and subsistence enabling members of the NetworkPlus to meet together to exchange ideas and expertise. This may include visits by or to experts overseas. Where possible industrial collaborators should meet their own travel costs.

**Administrative support** - Funding for administrative support can be requested to help in the co-ordination of the NetworkPlus. Costs should be reasonable and ideally only form a small part of the request for funding. Reasonable costs for monitoring and dissemination of the NetworkPlus output can also be included.

**Organisation of Activities** - Funding can be requested for costs involved in running activities such as networking events, expert working groups, debates, online discussion forums, lectures, seminars, short term people placements or exchanges, problem solving and team building workshops, skills training etc. Applicants are encouraged to think creatively about the range of activities that could support the delivery of the NetworkPlus goals.

**Research** - Research activity to support the research strategy developed within the NetworkPlus. Funds can be requested for PDRA staff, consumables, travel and subsistence and any other costs usually under 'Directly Incurred' headings. EPSRC would expect some examples of the types of projects at the application stage, but the research challenges should evolve during the course of the network activities and should be collaborative in nature. This should be requested under 'Other Directly Incurred Costs' and is expected to account for a

significant proportion of the total requested, the amount requested must be fully justified.

## Equipment

Resources for equipment are ineligible under this call.

## Eligibility

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/>

As this call is a targeted funding opportunity provided by EPSRC, higher education institutions, and some research council institutes and independent research organisations are eligible to apply. A list of eligible organisations to apply to EPSRC is provided at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>

There are no restrictions on the number of applications to this call per university; however, we would expect bids led by the same university to be significantly different in their focus. As the networks are intended to be UK-wide we would expect institutions to have coordinated with applicants prior to submission and networks to be combined if they are similar.

## How to apply

### Submitting application

Peer review for this call will consist of a multi-stage process. Applicants should submit an Intention to Submit by 08 September 2015; applicants who have not submitted an Intention to Submit will be ineligible for this call.

To complete the Intention to Submit form please follow the link provided <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GDIV4/> (also available on the call webpage) and complete the survey with the information contained within the appendix. EPSRC will acknowledge receipt of the Intention to Submit following the deadline of 08 September.

You should prepare and submit your full proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>).

When adding a new proposal, you should select:

- Council 'EPSRC'
- Document type 'Standard Proposal'
- Scheme 'Standard'
- On the Project Details page you should select the 'Healthcare Technologies Grand Challenges NetworksPlus ' call.

Note that clicking 'submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to EPSRC. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date. EPSRC must receive your application by **16:00 on 06 October 2015**.

**Proposals must be submitted on one single Je-S form even if they are multi-institutional bids.**

Guidance on the types of support that may be sought and advice on the completion of the research proposal forms are given on the EPSRC website <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/routes/> which should be consulted when preparing all proposals.

## **Guidance on writing an application**

Your submission should include the following documentation:

### **1. A standard Je-S form**

### **2. A Case for Support** (up to nine sides of A4, the additional 1 page is specifically for information on the management of feasibility funds)

The case for support must contain details on the following elements:

- Fit to the grand challenge- applicants should discuss which challenge their network will address and how it will contribute towards addressing the challenge; this should include details of the cross-cutting capabilities necessary to achieve this.
- Track record of the applicants – this should include details of the initial NetworkPlus membership and the involvement of international researchers (where appropriate)
- Plans for wider engagement - broader expertise that will be required and how this membership will be encouraged and monitored
- Planned linkages with other nationally and internationally relevant activities
- Planned activities of the network - this should include examples of some of the events and topics planned for the first 12-18 months of the network and a more general idea of event type and frequency for the remainder of the duration
- Management plans
  - General management of the network; including role of NetworkPlus coordinator
  - Detailed plans for the management of the feasibility funds and how applications for funding will be reviewed by the network (1 page). This must include how ethical considerations will be incorporated into the process. See the EPSRC's animal policy (<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/standards/animalresearchpolicy/>) and Je-S guidance ([https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/handbook/pages/GuidanceoncompletingaFellowship/Ethical\\_Information.htm](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/handbook/pages/GuidanceoncompletingaFellowship/Ethical_Information.htm)), the Peer Review Principles (<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/prprinciples/>) and the Responsible Innovation Framework (<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/framework/>) for guidance

- User engagement plans - successful applicants will be required to develop and execute a strategy for engaging with potential users of the research funded in the project (resources for this activity can be requested as part of the Pathways to Impact and must be justified in the application)
- Dissemination plans – this should include how the NetworkPlus outcomes will be disseminated and how the NetworkPlus activity may be sustained after the lifetime of the grant

Please ensure that all assessment criteria, as outlined in the section below, are covered within your case of support.

3. **A diagrammatic Workplan/Timeline** – this should show a timetable of planned activities associated with the NetworkPlus. (1page)

4. **A Justification of Resources** - this should provide a full justification for all the resources you have requested. (2 pages)

5. **A Pathways to impact plan** – This should detail plans for ensuring the NetworkPlus has an impact in the relevant research and user communities and the resources needed. This can include dissemination of network outcomes. For examples of the topics that could be considered as part of the proposal please see the Impact and Translation Toolkit

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/themes/healthcaretechnologies/strategy/toolkit/> (2 pages).

6. **Project Partner Letters of Support** from any partners contributing direct cash or in-kind support to the project (note: these should be listed on the Je-S form as project partners). Where appropriate up to three additional letters of support from international or industrial collaborators only. Letters of support are not required for UK academic institutions.

**EPSRC will not accept any other attachment types under this call.**

If the attachments are uploaded as Word documents, please be aware that once the application has been submitted to the Council/Funder, all the attachments will be converted and held as an Adobe Acrobat file (PDF). Also please note, that whilst we support a wide range, **we do not support all MS Word font types**. Therefore if an unsupported font type is used a different font type may be substituted which may result in changes to the layout of the document. For this reason we recommend that the documents are converted to PDF files before uploading.

Also, please note that on submission to council **all** non-PDF documents are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

In addition, where non-standard fonts are present, and even though the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.), the document is converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal

For advice on writing proposals see:

## Assessment

### Assessment process

Proposals submitted to this call will be considered against the assessment criteria mentioned below at an initial expert panel meeting in late January 2016. A number will then be invited to an interview panel in late February 2016, where the same assessment criteria will be used. It is expected that the Principal Investigator will be available to attend this panel with up to TWO other members of their team. Members for both panels will be selected from the research community.

### Assessment criteria

Applicants should consider carefully the following criteria which will be taken into account by the panels when assessing proposals

- Fit to the grand challenge:
  - The contribution the NetworkPlus will make towards addressing the challenge.
  - Relevance to the cross-cutting capabilities required to address the challenge (proposals should cover more than one capability).
  - Potential of the network to deliver high quality research of National Importance.
- Suitability of core management team - The strength of the proposed network and the range of expertise of core NetworkPlus members.
- Plans for wider engagement (academics and users) - Mechanism for widening the participation and collaboration with other relevant disciplines and interactions with international leaders in the field.
- Network activities - The extent to which the planned activities allow the generation of ideas and implementation of plans to address the needs of the grand challenge.
- Resources and Management (general) – The appropriateness of the requested resources and the effectiveness of the proposed management structure and plans.
- Management of feasibility funding – Appropriateness of plans for assessment of the feasibility funding.
- Impact:
  - Existence of a clearly thought through and acceptable pathways to impact
  - Appropriate engagement plans with users to accelerate impact
  - Appropriateness of dissemination plans.

- Added value – the added value that EPSRC funding for the Network will bring
- Sustainability of the activity after the lifetime of the grant.

## Additional grant conditions

In addition to standard terms and conditions for grants, successful applicants will be required to invite EPSRC representatives to events and to take part in management meetings. They will also be required to provide a short annual report detailing achievements, planned activities and allocation of plus funding.

We expect the funded networks to be collaborative not competitive i.e. they should work together where appropriate (for example, joint workshops). We also expect network representatives to attend knowledge sharing events, organised by EPSRC or others, to share best practice amongst the successful networks.

## Key dates

Activity	Date
Je-S open for submissions	07/07/2015
Compulsory Intent to Submit	08/09/2015
Closing date for submissions	06/10/2015
Initial expert panel meeting	January 2016
Interview invitation issued	Early February 2016
Interview panel meeting	February 2016
Decisions on proposals	March 2016

## Contacts

For further information relating to this call please contact:

Sarah Hobbs on [sarah.hobbs@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.hobbs@epsrc.ac.uk), 01793 444284

Katie Daniel on [katie.daniel@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:katie.daniel@epsrc.ac.uk), 01793 442895

For any queries regarding the submission of proposals through Je-S please contact the Je-S helpdesk on [JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or 01793 444164

Please contact your university research office for help and advice on writing your proposal and allow enough time before the closing date for your organisation's submission process.



## Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Sarah Hobbs	23/06/2015	1	N/A

## Appendix

Intent to Submit survey questions:

- 1) What is the title of your proposed network?
- 2) To which Grand Challenge does your NetworkPlus align?
- 3) Please name the Principal Investigator of the proposed network.
- 4) Please name any Co-Investigators on this network.
- 5) Please provide the name(s) and institution(s) of any other named participants in this network to date.
- 6) Please give an approximate value of the proposed network.
- 7) Please briefly describe the focus of the network and how this aligns to the grand challenge (max. 2000 characters.)