

Transformative Healthcare Technologies for 2050 Call

Collated Q&A document from Information Day
27 March 2019 – Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Process Type Questions

Q: *How many applications do you expect to fund?*

A: This call has a budget of up to £25 million available to support approximately 4 to 6 proposals, the exact numbers will depend on support requested.

Q: *How many years would you expect a large grant to be?*

A: This is entirely dependent on the science and EPSRC does not stipulate a length. However as a guideline, similar sized grants are 4-6 years.

Q: *How many applications will be taken through to full stage?*

A: Healthcare Technologies would expect to interview approximately 12 teams depending on the number of outline submissions and the outcome of the postal peer review process.

Q: *When are the full proposals due?*

A: 16.00, 27 August 2019, please note the full call document has been available since 4 March 2019.

Q: *Who will be assessing the transformational potential at the outline stage?*

A: This will be by expert panel as detailed in the Outline call document.

Q: *Who do you expect to be on the review panels for outlines?*

A: The panel may see outlines from across the full range of engineering, physical sciences, information and communications technologies and mathematical sciences. Expect “generous generalists” who can look at a range of topics within an area.

Q: *Will there be feedback provided following the Outline panel?*

A: If the panel raise specific points of feedback for a proposal this will be shared. We would hope to have some general feedback for all applicants.

Q: *How much flexibility is there within the consortium between Outline and Full proposals?*

A: The PI should stay the same but if some of the CoIs, collaborators or project partners change that is okay. Between outline and full there is +/- 10% budget flexibility, all changes need to be within this range.

Q: *How fixed are the costings?*

A: At Outline stage we require high level costings, between Outline and Full there is a +/- 10% flexibility in the costings. At Full proposal stage we expect the first 2 years of work packages to be detailed, for future years how the flexibility will be implemented and used should be considered.

Q: *What if a unique facility is identifiable at outline?*

A: Applicants should consider the wording of their proposals. They should also consider the ability of other groups to make use of companies and facilities. If a group makes themselves easily identifiable to EPSRC or the outline panel members the application will be rejected.

Q: *Looking through the JeS checklist for the outline, is a “justification of resources” not required?*

A: The case for support should include a short outline of the budget you have in mind. A standard Justification of Resources will be required at the full proposal stage.

Q: *In the outline call document, it states that there are 2 documents to upload on Je-S (Case for Support and Completed Proposal Form) but I can only see that there is one document that I can upload?*

A: There is only one document to ‘upload’ which is the 5 page case for support. The other document ‘Completed Proposal Form’ is an electronic form that you need to complete on Je-S. Please complete the following sections on the proposal form:

1. Organisation where the Grant would be held
2. Project Title
3. Duration of Grant
4. Applicants
5. Summary – within this section please include the following headings and detail:

Equipment: follow the format of Equipment: £XXX.

Grand Challenge: Name the Grand Challenge/s being addressed, with the principal Grand Challenge named first e.g. “1. Transforming Community Health and Care, 2. Frontiers of Physical Intervention

EPSRC Research Area addressed. List key words to describe the scientific research area that will be addressed

6. Summary of Resources Required for Project should describe overall costs. Project partner contributions are not required at the outline stage. All costs (including equipment costs) may only increase or decrease by a maximum of 10% between the outline and the full proposal stage.

Other sections of the proposal form are not required so please add N/A to the text on the form. This proposal form does not need to be anonymised.

Q: *At outline stage do we need letters of support?*

A: No

Q: *Why is the outline deadline so short?*

A: To ensure we enable as many applicants as possible to apply we have only stipulated minimal demand management. The call is expected to be very popular and as such we have included an anonymous outline stage prior to peer review and interview. Healthcare Technologies has tried to allow as much time as possible for the outline stage to enable co-collaboration and initial partnership building. The call was pre-announced on 31 January 2019, with the outline and full proposal documents published on 4 March 2019. The outline closing date is 16:00, 02 May 2019.

Updates in partners and collaborators between outline and full submission could be expected. At the anonymous outline stage a description of the breadth and appropriateness of the co-creation and collaboration is necessary. Applicants can explain plans for future collaboration and co-creation.

Q: *Will EPSRC provide follow on funding for successful applications?*

A: EPSRC cannot confirm follow on funding. Healthcare Technologies is encouraging co-creation and partnership building for scientific and impact benefit and feedback from the community suggests that this helps to ensure the longevity of groups.

Q: *Is the track record of the PI important?*

A: Track record will form a part of the full proposal stage and the PI should have the ability to lead a project of this scale and be seen as a scientific leader in the proposed field of the project.

Q: *If I am unsuccessful at outline stage, can I apply to standard mode?*

A: Any application to this call must clearly demonstrate, at each assessment stage, the need for a large grant. Applicants must be able to clearly describe the advantages and benefits of supporting a coherent programme of interrelated projects and other research activities rather than individual project grants. If a project does not need a large grant approach/funding mechanism and could be funded through standard mode it will be significantly less competitive in this call. Researchers should be clear on the most appropriate funding mechanism for their science.

Content Type Questions

Q: *Is this call focused on the NHS?*

A: The title of the call is Transformative Healthcare 2050. Applicants are encouraged to consider the wider healthcare environment. This can be especially helpful when considering the transformative vision of the science.

Q: *Is a focus on preventing ill health appropriate?*

A: Yes this is fine provided there is a majority of novel engineering or physical sciences required.

Q: *Is it okay to focus on the workplace?*

A: Yes, a focus on transforming the workplace to make it healthier and/or preventing ill health is okay. The novel engineering and physical sciences should be identified.

Q: *Is a proposal that covers the two identified Grand Challenges okay?*

A: Yes this is okay, the majority of the novel engineering and physical sciences should fall under one or both of the identified Grand Challenges: Transforming Community Health and Care and Frontiers of Physical Intervention.

Q: *How do we leverage technology already developed and combine with our own ideas?*

A: The most appropriate people to discuss this with are the developers/owners of the technologies of interest.

Q: *How would we reference the foundational work our group has done to support our proposed vision?*

A: The outline stage is anonymous, you can mention that previous work has demonstrated something is possible but you should not refer to it as previous work from your group.

Q: *What about applying for novel transformative ideas that are not currently (or yet) research strengths?*

A: There must be sufficient information in the vision to communicate the potential that could be realised. Truly transformative ideas are unlikely to come from current research strengths.

Q: *What level of risk do you expect (blue skies vs next step)?*

A: As with all research funded by EPSRC, it must be at low levels of technology-readiness and about basic research. Ideas with the potential to be truly transformative are what the call is about and implies adventure, thinking big. Communicating the vision of the problem and how it will be addressed will be key. Appropriate contingency planning and risk mitigation would be expected for all projects.

Q: *Could we apply for a pipeline of projects rather than a single self-contained project?*

A: The outline must be able to communicate the vision for how the research could potentially transform healthcare. With the full proposal we would expect similar flexibility as with a programme grant, where themes and direction are identified and there's a plan for the first couple of years, but then reviewers can see how it might evolve downstream.

Partnership Type Questions

Q: *Is there funding available for partnership building?*

A: During proposal preparation there is no funding available for partnership building. Within your proposal you can request resources for future partnership building within the pathways to impact.

Q: *Can I name non-academic partners in an outline proposal?*

A: Yes, non-academic partners can be listed. Any organisation with a place name within their title should be presented in a way that retains your anonymity.

Q: *To what extent will you be looking for new or sustainable partnerships?*

A: This will depend on the project, EPSRC has no expectations on whether partnerships in the proposal are new or existing, however they should be appropriate for your proposal. Applicants should consider stakeholder management throughout the lifetime of an award, how this could evolve and the resources required to enable this evolution.

Q: *Does EPSRC have any expectations about collaborations across universities?*

A: This depends on the project and whether all the expertise you require can be found in one university or requires wider partners, either is fine and there is no formal expectation from EPSRC.

Q: *What about working with industry partners, how can we resource this?*

A: The options are the same as for any standard EPSRC research grant. At the outline stage, you do not need to provide project partner letters of support. At the full proposal stage, please see the EPSRC website about project partners:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/lettersofsupport/>.

Q: *We have a long history with a business partner, if we name them will it reveal our identity?*

A: Large businesses have long histories with a number of institutions. It may be better to mention them as a partner but not that it builds on a long history of personal interaction with them.

Q: *What advice would you give to manage the expectations of potential clinical stakeholders?*

A: It will depend on the technology being developed within the project. We encourage co-creation with all stakeholders and clinical stakeholders could influence the direction of research to increase the likelihood translation and them having access to the new technology. Formally EPSRC will not fund clinical trials.

Q: *What are the opportunities for international collaborations?*

A: The call follows standard EPSRC rules for international collaboration. Resources can be requested for visiting researchers to come to the UK or to support UK researchers to visit international labs.

Impact Type Questions

Q: *Is there an expectation around the percentage of resources to be used on Pathways to Impact?*

A: There is no specific figure, it is what is appropriate for your project. We encourage all applicants to consider the Healthcare Impact and Translation toolkit and which elements of this could be relevant for their project.

Q: *What would you expect in demonstrating impact?*

A: EPSRC consider the full range of impacts; economic, social, academic, environmental, people. We would expect an investment of this size to have substantial impact but the types of impact achieved will depend on the specifics of the project.

Q: *Would EPSRC support healthy volunteer tests but not full clinical trials?*

A: Potentially yes. However it will depend on the technology solution being developed and the tests required. Any experiments involving humans will require appropriate ethical approvals to be put in place.

Remit Type Questions

Q: *Will we see something like this at UKRI level?*

A: We have always worked closely with our colleagues in other parts of UKRI and will continue to explore opportunities. Currently there is budget within EPSRC to carry out this activity and it has led to the current opportunity.

Q: *Where does EPSRC stop and HDR UK start?*

A: To be appropriate for this EPSRC call, the emphasis of the research must be on novel engineering and physical sciences research - which includes information systems, mathematical analyses and algorithm development that enable and progress developments in healthcare. With HDR UK, the novelty would come from the application of existing techniques and technologies to answer health questions.

Q: *How do we join-up and cross-over with MRC and ESRC?*

A: This call is from the Healthcare Technologies theme of EPSRC and the majority of the novel research must be within EPSRC's remit. This call has been discussed with colleagues in MRC and ESRC and they will be available to consider outlines that appear to fall outside the scope of this call and EPSRC's remit. This will not guarantee a route to funding but will help signpost potential alternative routes if a proposal is considered out of EPSRC's remit.