Second Call for Transformative Healthcare Technologies

What is the second call for Transformative Healthcare Technologies?
The second call for Transformative Healthcare Technologies is part of EPSRC’s initiative to advance investment in novel, adventurous and high risk multi-disciplinary/interdisciplinary research that will impact and transform healthcare by the year 2050.

Will you only fund brand new ideas, even if the vision has now expanded for a 30-year vision?
We will only fund novel ideas.

Are we looking at high risk from an EPS perspective or high risk from a medical perspective?
High risk from either perspective for high return in the healthcare space.

How does the second call defer from the first call?
Unlike the first call for Transformative healthcare Technologies, the second call will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1, the development phase, will identify projects that demonstrate readiness in order to deliver an ambitious programme of research in Phase 2.

The previous call was limited to one application from each HEI. Will this apply to the 2nd call?
No. We haven’t placed any limit on the number of applications per institution, however we encourage joint applicants within institutions.

Where can I find details of projects funded on the first call?
A link to a press release on our website can be found here: https://epsrc.ukri.org/newsevents/news/walk-through-cancer-diagnosis-and-robotic-muscles-among-ground-breaking-new-projects/

Most projects have been focused on a technology, rather than a clinical condition. Is a proposal that integrates different technology approaches with a focus on one (or more) clinical conditions encouraged?
Yes. As long as the research will be transformative and meets the vision and aim of the call. Projects should have a focus on a health outcome.

In the call currently open for applying to Phases 1 and 2?
No. The call is only currently open for applying to Phase 1.

What is the application process for Phase 1?
There will be a two-stage application process: an anonymised outline stage, followed by full proposals invited from those who are successful at the outline stage.

Can Early Career Researchers act as Principal Investigators?
Yes. If eligible for EPSRC funding. See https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/

Does the PI have to be in engineering, physical sciences, mathematics or ICT?
No but the proposals must how sufficient EPS remit

Can a Co-I be from a non-UK institution?
Yes. If they eligible for EPSRC funding.

What does Phase 1, the development phase, entail?
An initial round of funding, up to £6M, will be available to fund 15 to 20 feasibility studies that will analyse, evaluate and establish the attainability of key elements of the research project.
Second Call for Transformative Healthcare Technologies

For anonymised outline proposals, can references of previous work be included? Yes, but care must be taken to avoid identifying yourself.

At the outline stage, does the leading PI apply on behalf of the team through Je-S? Yes. The PI can easily add Co-Is to the application being submitted. However, each Co-I will need to have a Je-S account to enable their addition to the Je-S form.

Will the expert panel judge the anonymised versions of outline proposals? Yes.

What should the application in full proposals for Phase 1 describe? The application should detail the work packages for the feasibility study to be carried out in Phase 1 and describe elements of the potential delivery in Phase 2.

Can the initial application include funds for RAs? Yes.

What is the duration of the feasibility projects? The duration for Phase 1, feasibility projects, is 15 months with a set start date of 1 September 2021.

Are costings required for the outline stage? If yes, what level of detail will be required in the 'draft costing' at the outline stage? A summary of resources and overall cost can be included. Project partner contributions are not required at the outline stage.

What TRL level is expected for this call? It should be within EPSRC remit i.e. up to TRL 4.

Based on the assessment criteria, what evidence of co-creation is required in the outline? We expect to see plans for co-creation and working with relevant partners at the outline stage.

Do we need finalise all the co-investigators/project partners for the Phase 2 in the outline proposal for phase 1? No.

Is it possible to use the Phase 1 to build the relationships with other stakeholders regarding the co-creation for the phase 2 and then include them in that submission? Yes.

Will the full costing for Phase 2 be required in the application process for Phase 1? We do not require a Phase 2 full application (including costing) in advance of the feasibility study.

Is the consortium in Phase 1 expected to remain the same at Phase 2? No. However, we envisage the PI remains the same. Any need to change the leadership must be justified.

Are joint proposals allowed on this call? Yes. For joint projects, the lead organisation should, on behalf of all organisations involved in a project, submit one proposal through Joint electronic submission (Je-S) and attach all the relevant documentation for the project - researchers from non-lead organisations can be Co-Investigators.

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Second Call for Transformative Healthcare Technologies

Are figures allowed in the Case for Support for outlines?
Yes.

Can clinical trials and clinical evaluation be supported at Phase 2?
No. The aim of the call is to support innovative technologies at the earliest stage and to demonstrate their potential for long-term health benefits. Clinical trials and evaluation are outside the scope of this call and should instead be positioned as the downstream routes from this call.

Can clinicians be Co-Is and can their time be covered for Phase 1 and/or Phase 2?
Yes. However, EPSRC will only pay for Research Costs associated with the proposal. We will not pay for associated NHS support costs or NHS treatment cost. More information on eligible costs can be found here: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/nhs/

How many partners are expected per project?
We haven't placed any limits on the number of partners. However, we advise that the impact of partnership on projects should be elucidated.

Are international partnerships allowed?
Yes. However, the project should show a benefit to the UK.

For anonymised outline proposals, can partners be named?
Yes. However, any organisation with a place name within their title should be presented in a way that retains your anonymity (e.g. refer to the local NHS Trust rather than their full name).

Can describe their expertise and ability to undertake proposed research in outline and still maintain anonymity? If so, how can this be done while maintaining anonymity?
Yes. This can be done by not referencing the institution.

Is it possible to request costs for an RA to be employed by an oversea collaborator?
Yes. However, RAs should be employed on the project for a significant proportion of their time (normally in excess of 50% of contracted hours), if it is funded. For more information, see https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/routes/international/

Is a UK SME eligible for funding?
An SME could be a collaborator, a project partner or a subcontractor but they would need to apply with a university as the lead on a proposal.

The SME could receive funds as a subcontractor, please find details in this link: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/directlyincurredcosts/. The amount of funding would depend on the services needed by the project and how they are justified in the application.

Can I submit UKRI proposals that were previously rejected as too risky and ambitious?
Standard EPSRC resubmission policy applies. Please find details in this link: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/preparingnewproposals/

Will the call cover 100% of equipment cost?
No. EPSRC standard policy is 50% match funding on equipment.
Is there a preference between types of applications e.g. surgical vs social care?
No.

Are letters of support required at outline stage?
No.

Will EPSRC resubmission policy apply to the outline proposals?
No.

Does the outline have to develop/address the whole programme (development and potential delivery phase) in the application or just the development phase?
Both stages: the development and potential delivery phase.

What does Phase 2, the delivery stage, entail?
A closed call for awarded feasibility projects to submit a bid for a second round of funding where up to £24M will be available to fund 4 to 6 substantial programmes of research for about 3 to 4. More details will be available when the call is issued next year.

When will the call for Phase 2 be issued?
With a proposed set start date of September 2021 for feasibility studies, we expect the call for phase two to be issued in June 2022, i.e. the 9th month mark of feasibility projects.