

# International Centre to Centre Research Collaborations Call - Frequently Asked Questions

For more information on the call please refer to the call document available on the call webpage: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/calls/international-centre-to-centre-research-collaborations1/>

Most of the questions answered below were captured during the call webinar on 18 June 2020. The slides from the webinar are also available on the call webpage at the above link.

If you have any questions regarding specific eligibility please contact the International team via the International inbox - [International@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:International@epsrc.ukri.org)

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## 1. Eligibility

### 1.1. Investigator Team/Consortium

- a. It states under criterion A "majority of the applicant team to be Investigators on the existing strategic grant", what balance would you expect to see in the applicant team?**

The applicant team should be appropriate for the proposed project's direction and objectives and should address the fit to the call criterion of a track record

of working together collaboratively. At least 50% of the investigators within the consortium should also be investigators from the existing strategic grant.

**b. Is there any requirement that all partners on the existing strategic grant be included in the centre-to-centre proposal?**

There is no need to include all the investigators involved in the existing strategic grant in the application to this call, it should depend on the proposed project's direction and objectives of the project that will be submitted.

**c. Is there any guidance on the number of investigators you expect to be involved from the UK side or the number of international partners?**

There is no specific maximum or minimum number of investigators we would expect to see involved in the applications. We expect the investigator team to be the most appropriate set of researchers to achieve the proposed project. We are expecting to see a variety of applications some with larger numbers of UK investigator and some with fewer. UK investigators can be from a single institution or multiple institutions. We would also expect to see some projects working with one international institution and others working with several international institutions, some in a variety of different countries.

**d. Could the Principal Investigator be resident outside UK?**

Standard eligibility for Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators applies for this call

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/>. International Co-Investigators are not eligible on this call.

## **1.2. Eligibility Criteria**

**a. Can you please explain the eligibility in terms of A and B criteria? Is it 'A or B', or 'A and B'?**

Applicant consortia only need to satisfy one of the criteria, A or B. They can satisfy both, but it is not a requirement.

**b. If the outline submission date moves back, will the eligibility date move too (in terms of active grants?)**

The eligibility date of 8 September 2020 will not change even if the outline submission date changes. Grants where an offer letter is issued after the 8 September 2020 but before the new outline submission deadline would be able to be used to establish eligibility.

**c. If a grant has not started but it has been awarded can be used to contribute to the £3M portfolio?**

If the offer letter for the grant has been issued by 8 September 2020 then it can be included even if the project has not started.

**d. What areas of fundamental research would you consider as having lower value grants?**

We have not provided a list of specific areas as we do not want to exclude areas by omission. If you think that your team/research area may be eligible for the exception under criterion B please contact the International inbox ([International@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:International@epsrc.ukri.org)) and we can discuss your specific case with you.

**e. Is one large EPSRC grant, with a value greater than £3M sufficient to meet criterion B?**

Yes, there is no minimum number of grants that can be listed in order to establish eligibility in criterion B.

**f. For criterion B, is this a portfolio of grants as Principal Investigator?**

Yes, grants can only be included in the consortium's portfolio if the Principal Investigator of that grant is involved in the consortium. Any individual grant may only be cited against one application to this call except in the circumstances set out in criterion A.

**g. Could a PI from University A use his/her share of a grant that is collaborative and led from University B, to meet the eligibility criteria?**

Linked grants can only collectively be listed against one application to this call except under the circumstances set out in criterion A.

**h. Is it the EPSRC contribution or the FEC cost of the grant that is used for the qualifying amount under criterion B?**

It is the EPSRC contribution.

## **2. Funding Available**

**a. Within the available £15 million, are there minimum/maximum limits on the requested support for each proposed consortium?**

With the £15 million available for this call, we aim to fund 10-15 research consortia through the activity, so we would expect applications to include reasonable funding requests within the funding available. We expect at least two full-time equivalent postdoctoral research staff to be requested on each proposal.

**b. Are costs associated with UK researchers spending time in the overseas partner's institution eligible?**

Applications can request costs to support travel, subsistence and consumables for the UK Investigators and research staff to visit or have extended work placements to a partner's laboratory overseas. Requests can also be made for resources to enable different approaches to building and sustaining collaborations, which reduce the need to travel.

**c. Can PhD students' travel and accommodation be paid for, either incoming or out-going?**

Requests for funding associated with PhD studentships are not eligible for inclusion.

## **2.1. Postdoctoral Support**

**a. For a consortium with two UK partners, are you expecting projects to have one postdoctoral researcher funded for each partner of the consortium?**

Applicants are free to decide on the allocation of the postdoctoral support between the UK investigators that would best fit the project they are proposing.

**b. For the two postdoctoral researchers' requirement, could a request be made to support four postdoctoral researchers each over half of the period of the grant?**

If appropriate for the proposed project's direction and objectives, then applicants can request postdoctoral researcher positions that don't necessarily span the full length of the project or include part-time positions. However, we do not expect the proposal to include a request for short-term postdoctoral researcher positions. The total number of postdoctoral research staff months must at least be equivalent to the contribution from two full-time equivalent postdoctoral research staff.

**c. Could the UK salaried postdoctoral research staff spend an extended period with international partners?**

Postdoctoral research staff employed by a UK institution as part of a grant supported by this call could spend an extended period working at an international partners' institution.

## **2.2. International Partners**

**a. Can international partners be publicly funded research organisations in addition to academic organisations?**

Yes, proposed overseas partner organisations may be a university, public sector research organisation or publicly funded research institute.

## **2.3. International Partner Contribution**

**a. What contribution do you expect to see from the overseas partners?**

We would expect to see contributions from overseas partners to the project but recognise that it will depend on the nature of the project whether those are cash or in-kind contributions. Contributions could include investigators time, staff costs, travel and/or laboratory access. Aspects of the Fit to the Call criterion in particular will assess the contribution of the overseas partner.

- b. If the overseas partners are applying for or plan to apply for funding in parallel to enable their participation in the consortium, are they expected to submit the same application to their national agency?**

We would not necessarily expect them to submit the same application to their national research agency as they may have different processes and policies. We would expect them to request the costs they require to be involved in the project, if they are not able to secure those funds from other sources, with a view to obtaining that funding on similar timescales to this call.

- c. Can the international partner contribution take the form of existing aligned funding or do they have to be applying for new funding?**

The international partner contribution does not need to be new funding they are applying for, their contribution can take the form of aligned existing funds.

- d. Can international partners who will be receiving funding from the project also be named as project partners?**

On standard EPSRC projects, organisations who would receive support from the grant cannot be Project Partners. However, to ensure that we have a searchable record of all the contributions from international partners we have made an exception for this call.

## **2.4. International Partner Costs**

- a. What costs can be included in the support for the visit of overseas partners to the UK?**

Support may be requested for visits by overseas partners to the UK of up to 12 months per individual and may include estates and indirect costs for any visiting researcher, regardless of whether the support requested includes a salary contribution or is only travel and subsistence.

- b. If International Co-Investigators may not be requested on this call what support is available for working with academics at international organisations?**

International collaborators may spend a period of up to 12 months in the UK and funding for costs incurred during this time are eligible. Under some UKRI schemes and call academics at international organisations can be listed as Co-Investigators, and funding can be requested for costs, including salary, incurred whilst they are in their own country. However, for this call, in line with standard EPSRC policy, international academic collaborators cannot be listed as Co-Investigators on the application.

- c. What percentage of the total funding we can allocate to overseas partners?**

There is no specific limit on the percentage of the total funding that can be allocated to overseas partners.

**d. Is the budget of up to 12 months of support for international visitors per person from overseas or the visitors collectively?**

Support may be requested for visits by overseas partners to the UK of up to 12 months per individual.

**e. Does the request for the salary for overseas academics while in UK require justification within the Justification of Resources?**

Applicants can request a salary for overseas academics while they are in the UK. We would not expect you to justify the level of a salary, but we would expect an explanation of why a request for salary is being included.

## **2.5. Industrial Partner Contributions**

**a. What form do you expect contributions from industry partners to take?**

The support from industry should be appropriate to the project. We recognise that it may be difficult for some industries to commit to cash contributions at present so it's not a requirement of this call. We are looking for a partnership to drive the research forward, so in-kind contributions such as time and co-creation of the research ideas are as valuable as cash. We will ensure peer reviewers are aware that cash contributions were not a requirement.

## **3. Intellectual Property**

**a. Do you have any preference about the intellectual property ownership for projects submitted to this call?**

Our standard guidance on intellectual property, available here: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/ip/> applies to projects supported by this call.

## **4. Assessment Process**

**a. Where applicants are invited to full proposal, do they receive feedback on the outline application?**

It is unlikely that we will be able to provide feedback on outline applications that are invited to submit a full proposal. If the panel requests specific feedback should be provided on individual proposals this will be passed to applicants.

**b. Which additional documents will be required at full proposal stage?**

At the full proposal stage the additional documentation will include but may not be limited to:

- An additional four pages for the Case for Support
- A workplan
- An additional page for the Justification of Resources
- CVs for Visiting Researchers

- Project Partner Letters of Support

**c. Will proposals be grouped for assessment so that panels can be assembled with experts in relevant fields of research?**

If there is significant demand, then we will group the applications by topic and run two or more prioritisation panels.

**d. Does the outline stage count towards the "repeatedly unsuccessful applicant" policy?**

As per the standard EPSRC policy, outlines will not be taken into consideration for the calculation of applicant status under the Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Full Proposal submissions to this call will count towards the Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Further information about the policy can be found at:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/basics/resubpol/rua/>

## **5. Assessment Criteria**

**a. How can we demonstrate proof of working together?**

The track record of the UK applicant team working together is one aspect of the Fit to the call assessment criterion. Whether you meet this criterion will be assessed by the panel. Anything that establishes a prior connection between two or more of the consortium members is permissible, this could include, but is not limited to, joint projects and publications. Please note the information provided in the Proposal Cover Letter will not be assessed by the panel and will only be assessed internally to see whether you meet the eligibility criteria.

**b. Does the prior collaboration need to be individual researcher to researcher or is UK group to group or international organisation sufficient?**

Evidence of previous collaboration within the consortium of UK investigators is important but would not necessarily expect to see a prior relationship between each UK investigator and every other UK investigator. The collaboration with the international investigators can be a new collaboration or building on an existing relationship.

## **6. First Call Information**

**a. Is there a repository of researchers that were funded in previous years through Centre to Centre collaboration?**

Information on the projects funded by the first call is available here:

<https://gow.epsrc.ukri.org/NGBOViewPanelROL.aspx?PanelId=1-660RRW&RankingListId=1-660RW2>