Healthcare Technologies New Challenges NetworkPlus

Call type: Invitation for outlines

Closing date: 16:00, 15 September 2020

Related themes: Digital economy, Energy, Engineering, Healthcare technologies, ICT, Manufacturing the future, Mathematical sciences, Physical sciences

Contents of this call document

Summary

The Healthcare Technologies (HT) Theme is looking to support a new suite of networks which address our grand challenges [1]and which will help to shape our future research portfolio. We inviting proposals for networks where engineering and physical sciences has a pivotal role in addressing new and emerging opportunities to help ensure our future health and well being.

Research Networks will provide support for expanding existing collaborations and building new collaborations, across academic disciplines, with stakeholders within the UK and developing countries and promoting international engagement.

We are looking to encourage the development of ambitious and creative approaches to future research and, through access to feasibility and seed funding, provide support for genuine co-design and co-delivery of high quality research with impact embedded.

We are keen to support networks which address our delivery plan priorities for transforming healthcare:

- Technologies to improve healthcare treatment
- Affordable & inclusive healthcare solutions
- Healthier Environments where people live and work
- New Digital healthcare systems

We are looking to support between six and eight 'NetworkPlus' grants to stimulate development of new topics in HT research, building capacity to tackle health issues of national and global importance.

These networks will bring together relevant parts of the interdisciplinary HT communities and a variety of stakeholders, at the early stages of co-design and co-delivery to identify new research opportunities, build collaborations and grow the area of research for the benefit of the UK and developing countries.

The NetworkPluses could undertake a variety of activities including workshops, events, feasibility studies, secondments or horizon scanning. 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.

There is up to £5 million available to fund a balanced portfolio of awards.

There will be a webinar on 22 July to facilitate discussion and allow potential applicants to ask questions about the call. Anyone intending to submit a proposal to this call must register their **Intent to Submit by 16:00, 4 September 2020.** (see "How To Apply" section for detail). Applicants that do not register

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[1] https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/themes/healthcaretechnologies/strategy/

their intent to submit before the deadline will be ineligible for the call. The deadline for **outline proposals are 16:00, 15 September 2020.**

Background

In 2016, the HT Theme funded 14 NetworkPlus awards, which is coming to an end in 2021.

These networks developed a rich body of outputs, including new collaborations, grant proposals, new research methods and feasibility studies. Lessons learned from the previous NetworkPlus activities include:

- A clear, well-defined topic for the network is needed to focus plans and activities;

- Administrative and Host-University support for the network is vital, in order to support activities such as feasibility studies and dissemination activities;

- Different scales of feasibility study funding are appropriate for different research topics or disciplines;

- Expectation and arrangements for Full Economic Costing of network activities need to be clear across all parties;

- Long-term plans for the legacy and/or sustainability of the network need to be considered early on.

For more information about EPSRC's portfolio and strategies, see the following links:

Healthcare Technologies strategy and grand challenges
https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/themes/healthcaretechnologies/strategy/

EPSRC Delivery Plan
https://epsrc.ukri.org/about/plans/dp2019/

UKRI healthy ageing strategy
https://www.ukri.org/files/about/ukri-strategy-document-pdf/?pdf=Strategic-Prospectus

Guide to best practice for network grants
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/routes/network/networks/bestpractice/

Aim and scope of the call

The HT Theme would like to support 'NetworkPlus' grants to allow development of HT research and communities in new healthcare areas of national and global importance. The aims of these NetworkPlus awards will be to:

- Bring together experts from across all relevant research disciplines and stakeholders, building new communities or creating new links

between different existing communities, with a 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;

- Identify and address the barriers to achieving the challenge;

- Initiate preliminary or feasibility research to tackle the challenge;

- Networks must be highly collaborative and with strong engagement with healthcare professionals;

- Engage with interested users of research, including business, clinicians, patient groups and policy makers, to shape future research directions;

- Seeking for solutions as well as applications of research.

NetworkPlus proposals should complement current research activities and existing networks, for example the EPSRC funded award on treatment of osteoarthritis (https://www.oatechnetwork.org/) and the award on closed loop control approach to provide optimised treatment (www.cyclops-network.ac.uk). We are not looking to provide continuation funding for existing networks, but NetworkPluses may build on new opportunities highlighted by previous networking activities.

Funding available

The Healthcare Technology Theme would like to support between six and eight 'NetworkPlus' grants, and there is up to £5 million available in total.

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

Funding requested under the Directly Allocated cost heading 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 leading the NetworkPlus. The salary costs of NetworkPlus participants should not be included in the proposal and we would not expect these individuals to be Co-Investigators.

Funding requested under the Directly Incurred cost heading may include:

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. This may also include travel and subsistence costs to support secondments. Where possible collaborators should meet their own travel costs.

Administrative support – A sufficient level of administrative support should be requested to help in the co-ordination and management of the NetworkPlus

and ensure smooth running of the NetworkPlus. 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, virtual discussion forums, lectures, seminars, problem solving workshops 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 eligible under 'Directly Incurred' headings. This is likely to include a budget for feasibility studies that can be allocated to researchers at other universities; in this case applicants will need to think carefully about how this budget will be managed. 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 co-created and collaborative in nature.

Guidance on the application process is given on the EPSRC website. (https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The long term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent. EPSRC expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice and funding policy. We are committed to supporting the research community, offering a range of flexible options which allow applicants to design a package that fits their research goals, career and personal circumstances. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who job share, have a part-time contract, or need flexible working arrangements.

Peer review is central to EPSRC funding decisions, we require expert advice and robust decision making processes for all EPSRC funding initiatives. We are committed to ensuring that fairness is fully reflected in all our funding processes by advancing policy which supports equality, diversity and inclusion. Please see our Equality and Diversity webpages https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/equalitydiversity/ for further information.

Responsible Innovation

EPSRC is fully committed to develop and promote responsible innovation. Research has the ability to not only produce understanding, knowledge and value, but also unintended consequences, questions, ethical dilemmas and, at times, unexpected social transformations. We recognise that we have a duty of care to promote approaches to responsible innovation that will initiate ongoing reflection about the potential ethical and societal implications of the research that we sponsor and to encourage our research community to do likewise.

Responsible innovation creates spaces and processes to explore innovation and its consequences in an open, inclusive and timely way, going beyond consideration of ethics, public engagement, risk and regulation. Innovation is a

collective responsibility, where funders, researchers, interested and affected parties, including the public, all have an important role to play. Applicants are expected to work within the EPSRC Framework for Responsible Innovation given on the EPSRC website (https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/framework/).

Guidance on Journal-based metrics

As part of our commitment to support the recommendations and principles set out by the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; https://sfdora.org/read/), UKRI reviewers and panel members are advised not to use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an investigator's contributions, or to make funding decisions.

The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics, or the identity of the journal, in which it was published, especially for early-stage researchers. Reviewers and panel members are encouraged to consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets, software, inventions, patents, preprints, other commercial activities, etc.) in addition to research publications. We advise our peer reviewers and panel members to consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

Equipment

Equipment is not available through this call.

Eligibility

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/

A list of eligible organisations is provided at: https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/

How to apply

Notify EPSRC of your intent to apply

Applicants must submit an Intention to Submit by 16:00, 4 September 2020 and applicants who have not submitted prior to this date will be ineligible to submit a full proposal.

To complete the Intention to Submit form please visit the call page at **https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NetworkPlus/** and complete the short web form. EPSRC will acknowledge receipt of the Intention to Submit. A full list of the questions asked during the Intention to Submit process is included at Appendix A.

The information provided through the Intention to Submit process is not intended to unduly constrain the content of the outline proposal. Survey responses will be used to give us an indication of the level of interest and enable us to identify

panel members more quickly. **Applicants that do not register their intent to submit will have their applications rejected.**

There are no constraints on the number of applications which may be submitted from a single institution through this call. However, EPSRC expects that universities will only put forward the most promising projects. Applicants must ensure that they have the support of their university before preparing an Intention to Submit.

EPSRC will reject applications that are not eligible at the Intent to Submit stage. Please see the eligibility section for details on the eligibility criteria.

Submitting an application

You should prepare and submit your 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 'Outline Proposal'

- Scheme 'Outline'

- On the Project Details page you should select the ''Healthcare Technologies New Challenges NetworkPlus – Outlines'' 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 15 September 2020.**

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 (https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/) which should be consulted when preparing all proposals.

Full proposals invited following a successful outline stage must have the 'Related Grant' field completed in Je-S. Please use the option 'Successful Outline'.

Guidance on writing an application

At the Outline stage, applicants should submit:

- Outline application form

- Four-page outline Case for Support

These are the only attachments allowed. Project partners may be identified within the outline Case for Support but should not provide letters of support at this stage. No other documents should be submitted and any that are will not be seen by the panel.

Applicants should include the following information in the outline proposal:

- Fit to the grand challenge- applicants should discuss which challenge their network will address and how it will identify new research opportunities, build collaborations and grow the area of research for the benefit of the UK areas and global importance.
- The track record of the team and leadership qualities of the PI - why are these the best people to run the NetworkPlus? Include details on the involvement of international researchers (where appropriate).
- Plans for wider engagement – broader expertise that will be required.
- 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.

Full proposal total costs should not vary by more than 10% from the outline stage, unless feedback from the Outline panel indicates otherwise or prior agreement is obtained from EPSRC.

More than half of the proposed activity should fall within EPSRC's remit. Proposals that are not sufficiently within EPSRC's remit or the remit of this call will be rejected.

Applicants should use the Ethical Information section on the Je-S form to demonstrate to peer reviewers that they have fully considered any ethical issues concerning the material they intend to use, the nature and choice, current public perceptions and attitudes towards the subject matter or research area. EPSRC will not fund a project if it believes that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for. All relevant parts of the Ethical Information section must be completed. If the research will involve human participation or the use of animals covered by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 it is recommended that applicants pay particular attention to the guidance highlighted below. EPSRC reserves the right to reject applications prior to peer review if the Ethical Information sections are not completed correctly.

Further guidance on completing the Je-S form can be found at https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/GuidanceonCompletingaStandardG/EthicalInformation.htm. Other relevant guidance includes: EPSRC's policy on animal use in research (https://www.epsrc.ukri.org/about/standards/animalresearchpolicy/) and the Responsible Innovation Framework (https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/framework/).

Please note that on submission to EPSRC **all** non-PDF documents uploaded onto Je-S 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.

For advice on writing proposals see:

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/

Assessment

Assessment process

NetworkPlus outline proposals will be assessed against the criteria below by an independent panel of HT experts, selected to represent a wide range of HT research and stakeholders, who will produce a rank order list. The outline panel may also provide feedback in the interests of preventing overlapping networks and creating the strongest possible networks for Healthcare Technologies research. The highest ranked outlines will be invited to prepare and submit full proposals.

The deadline for submission of full proposals will be in 13 January 2021. Applicants will then be invited to interview w/c 15 March 2021 over two days. The interview panel will be asked to make funding recommendations to EPSRC.

A funding decision will be made by the end of March 2021.

In the event of this call being substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable, EPSRC reserve the right to modify the assessment process.

Assessment criteria for outline proposals:

- Importance of the Network topic – Relevance to new research opportunities and building new collaborations to address affordable healthcare solutions. How does the Network contribute to addressing key societal health challenges?

- Potential to develop cross cutting capabilities – Relevance to the cross-cutting capabilities required to address the challenge (proposals should cover more than one capability). How does the Network complements other UK research funded in the area, including any relationship to the EPSRC portfolio?

- Potential for the Network to drive high quality research of national and global importance.

- Added value – the added value that EPSRC funding for the Network will bring.

Additional assessment criteria for full proposals:

- Fit to the grand challenge- The contribution the NetworkPlus will make towards addressing the challenge.

- Suitability of core management team - The strength of the proposed network and the range of expertise of core NetworkPlus members.

- Management of feasibility funding – Appropriateness of plans for assessment of the feasibility funding.

- 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.

- Impact - Embedding impact and descrbing how the NetworkPlus will be impactful; appropriate engagement plans with users to accelerate impact; appropriateness of dissemination plans.

- Sustainability of the activity after the lifetime of the grant.

Additional grant conditions

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.

Feedback

Guidance and feedback may be given to successful outline applicants in the interests of preventing overlapping networks and creating the strongest possible networks for UK Healthcare Technologies research. Feedback will be provided to all applicants after the panel interview.

The final rank ordered list will be available on EPSRC Grants on the Web system when applicants are informed: https://gow.epsrc.ukri.org

Moving forward

Please note that we will require full proposals to be submitted on one single Je-S form even if they are multi-institutional bids. We will also require a letter of support from the host organisation.

Submissions to this call will not 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/

IF you are currently restricted under the Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy, you may submit unlimited outlines but you will only be able to submit one full proposal (as PI or CO-I) during the 12 month restricted period.

Key dates

Activity	Date
Outline call opens in JeS	1 July 2020
Webinar	22 July 2020

Intent to Submit	4 September 2020
Outlines call closes	15 September 2020
Outline panel meeting	29 October 2020
Invitation to full proposals	2 November 2020
Deadline for full proposals	13 January 2021
Interview Interview panel meetings	w/c 15 March 2021

EPSRC aims to adhere to the key dates as published, however there may be exceptions where the panel meetings may have to change due to panel member availability.

Contacts

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Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Jeanine Woolley	12 June	1	N/A

Appendices

A.Intent to Submit survey questions: to be confirmed

1. Principal Investigator name and institution of the research proposal.

2. Email address of the PI (please use the same email address which is registered in your Je-S profile).

3. Co-Investigators and institutions.

4. Confirmation that Research Office is aware of your intention to submit a proposal to this call.

5. Title (tentative) of the proposed Networkplus.

6. Name all clinical partners/business partners involved with the proposal.

7. Which HT grand challenge does your proposed NetworkPlus proposal align to?

8. Please briefly describe the healthcare need that the NetworkPlus is addressing. (max 1000 characters).

9. Please list 5 keywords relating to the research in the proposal.

10. Approximate value of the funds (£s) to be requested from EPSRC (at 80% fEC).

Je-S attachments Check List

Outline:

Case for Support	Four pages	Mandatory	

Please ensure you adhere to the above attachment requirements when submitting your proposal. Any missing, over length or unnecessary attachments may result in your proposal being rejected.

Standard:

Attachment Type	Maximum Page length	Mandatory/Optional	Extra Guidance
Case for Support	Eight pages	M	Comprising up to two A4 sides for a track record, and six A4 sides describing proposed research and its context.
Workplan	One page	M	
Justification for Resources	Two pages	M	
CVs	Two pages each	As Required by EPSRC (state 'Not required' if no CVs are required)	For named and visiting researchers, and researcher co-investigators only.
Project Partner Letters of Support	No page limits	As Required by EPSRC	Must be included from all named project partners. Must be on headed paper, and be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission date.
Letters of Support	No page limits	As Required by EPSRC	In exceptional circumstances a maximum of three letters can be submitted.
Proposal Cover Letter	No page limit	Optional	The cover letter can be used to highlight any important information to EPSRC. This attachment type is not seen by

			reviewers or panel members.