

EPSRC-NIHR Healthcare Technology Cooperatives Partnership Awards

FAQs

These FAQs are an output of the workshop for potential applicants, held on Friday 1st November 2013 at the Department of Health, Skipton House, London.

Please note that attending the workshop is not an eligibility requirement of the call.

Q1. May I submit a proposal if I don't meet the eligibility requirement for "a demonstrable sustained track record of EPSRC funded research relevant to the NIHR HTC(s) in question"?

A1. It is expected that together the Principal Investigator (PI) and/or Co-Investigator (Co-I) have a sustained EPSRC funding track record. The intention of this eligibility requirement is to ensure that the partnership awards are led by researchers who work within EPSRC's remit.

Where the PI and/or Co-I's EPSRC track record is for basic science but not for healthcare related research they should demonstrate in the case for support that they have an appropriate track record from other funders related to the NIHR HTC in question.

Q2. What does EPSRC track record mean?

A2. We would expect at least one of the applicants (PI or Co-I) to have been awarded a number of EPSRC research grants either as PI or Co-I.

Q3. Are you expecting the partnership to be led by one of the NIHR HTCs or can someone who is not currently linked to an NIHR HTC lead it?

A3. The choice of members of the partnership leadership team should be appropriate for the proposal, the PI and/or Co-I may or may not already be involved in an NIHR HTC.

However, we expect that the partnership should have collective leadership with the management team involving the PI, Co-I and the NIHR HTC(s).

Q4. So you wouldn't be surprised to see a PI who is not currently part of an NIHR HTC leading the network?

A4. No, but the PI in question would need to demonstrate a track record of research related to the focus of the proposed partnership.

Q5. Is there any restriction on proposals led by universities who are already partners in an NIHR HTC?

A5. There is no restriction on proposals from universities already involved in an NIHR HTC. However, the call aims to facilitate broader networking therefore the partnership should involve people from beyond the current NIHR HTC network.

Q6. Define what you mean by a network?

A6. You should demonstrate in your case for support why initial members and the Project Partners are appropriate for the partnership proposed and how they will work efficiently and effectively with the partnership network. The case should also be made for the size and scope of the partnership e.g. technological or clinical focus, local vs. national network. The primary assessment criteria will be the quality of the proposed partnership.

Networks may include (but are not limited to) a number of the following:

- One or more NIHR HTCs
- Different departments from one or more universities
- Local and/or national hospitals
- Industry

Further details on Project Partners can be found at

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance/preparing/Pages/lettersofsupport.aspx>.

Q7. Would it be ok to have a large company as a partner as long as they have a presence in the UK or do they need to be UK based? Would it be favourable to have an SME in the programme?

A7. See answer to Q6. Project Partners do not need to be based in the UK but if they are not UK-based the case should be made for how the partnership will benefit the UK. There is no preference for SMEs over larger companies, Project Partners should be appropriate for the network.

Q8. Would it be possible to have a network with one NIHR HTC, one University and a number of industry partners?

A8. See answer to Q6. The intention of this call is to increase collaboration between researchers in EPSRC's remit and the NIHR HTCs. The applicants would need to make the case for how the proposed partnership extends beyond the current NIHR HTC.

Q9. Is there an opportunity to include hospitals from Europe in the network?

A9. It is possible to have European hospitals as Project Partners on a network proposal. However, it should be noted that Project Partners cannot benefit financially from EPSRC grants and therefore the hospital would need to fund their own travel to any network events.

Q10. Can the travel and subsistence funds included in the partnership award be used to support non-academic attendance at events?

A10. Travel and subsistence funds may only be used to support academics or invited speakers. Project Partners may not financially benefit from the grant, therefore unless individuals are invited to speak at the event their travel and subsistence may not be charged to the grant. It is therefore advisable to consider carefully the location of events associated with the partnership.

Q11. Are there any restrictions on the number of applications from an individual university?

A11. There is no restriction on the number of proposals submitted by a university, though each proposal should include no more than three NIHR HTCs as Project Partners.

Q12. How well established/formed do you expect the networks to be?

A12. Proposals submitted to this call may be completely new or may be the development or expansion of existing networks. We would expect networks to continue to expand and evolve during their lifetime. How new members are brought into the network is up to the applicants and should be outlined in the proposal.

Q13. In 3 years time what would success look like, what will a successful outcome of this network look like?

A13. New collaborations between EPSRC researchers, relevant NHS staff/organisations, clinicians, and industry will have been formed and existing collaborations will have been strengthened. This will have led to the generation of new ideas and concepts, some of which will have been submitted as research proposals to funders, including EPSRC, and a number will have been successful. In the longer term there will be an increase in the translation of EPS innovation to application in healthcare.

Q14. Only organisations in England were eligible for funding from the NIHR HTC call. Will the whole of UK be eligible to apply to the EPSRC-NIHR HTC Partnership Awards call? Can funding be awarded outside England? Can collaborators from Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland be used?

A14. Funding for the EPSRC-NIHR HTC Partnership Awards is open to the whole of the UK.

Q15. Please clarify what you mean by support for feasibility studies? Are these feasibility studies for basic research driven by clinical need?

A15. Feasibility studies provide the network with the opportunity to test ideas/concepts. As stated in the call document these funds are intended to assess the potential clinical application of new basic research, they may also be used for testing new avenues of basic research. The partnership leadership team should discuss and make the case for what is appropriate within the scope of the partnership.

Q16. How specific do proposals need to be about the feasibility studies as these are unknown at this stage?

A16. It is not expected that partnerships will have details of specific feasibility studies at this stage of the process.

Q17. Can feasibility funds be used for anything?

A17. No, these funds may not be used for equipment or PhD students. They may be used for staff resources and consumables.

Q18. If an NIHR HTC is approached to be involved in a number of potential partnerships, how should they manage this?

A18. NIHR HTCs should self-manage the number of partnership proposals that they are involved with. It is advised that they don't spread their resources too thinly.

Q19. Can time for NIHR HTC staff be charged to the partnership grant?

A19. Only time for the PI, Co-I and an administrator may be charged to the grant. The PI and Co-I should be eligible to apply for EPSRC funding.