

Healthcare Partnerships

**Closing date for the First Tranche of Expressions of Interest:
12 noon 20th October 2009**

1. Introduction

The main purpose of the new Healthcare Partnerships scheme is to establish a joint funding stream for high quality **engineering and physical science research** within academe that provides a potential route for exploitation within the UK healthcare arena.

This call invites collaborative research proposals which address an important healthcare issue, and must include a non-academic partner (e.g. a charity, industry or representative organisation) which is able to provide, as a minimum, a cash contribution of £10k towards the total academic costs of the project. Proposals should include a pathway to ensuring appropriate impact and deployment which might be provided by the non-academic partner(s). In this area impact could well focus on quality of life. It would also be highly desirable for the proposal to include appropriate end user involvement (e.g. patients, carers or policy makers) and proposals should describe how this will be achieved.

Funding will be provided through a two stage process: Expressions of Interest (EoIs) and invited full proposals; this process is expected to continue on a rolling basis, with a second and third tranche being planned for 2010 (see Key Dates(8) and Further Information(9) sections below). The first assessment of EoIs will take place in November 2009 and the subsequent first tranche of full proposals will then be assessed in March 2010. Subject to the quality of the proposals received, there is an initial fund of £8 million available for the first tranche of proposals, where we expect to support 5-15 projects.

This document contains the following information:

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5. Application procedure
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2. Background

The Towards Next Generation Healthcare (TNGH) programme in EPSRC seeks to build on the extensive base of existing research in healthcare (almost £500M of current grants), funded through responsive mode grants, by working in partnership with other funders in order to increase the contribution that engineering and physical sciences can make to current challenges in healthcare and the changing demography of the UK. The TNGH

programme has held two very successful calls with the Wellcome Trust and Cancer Research UK, each with £45M in joint funding, which have also provided a valuable exploitation path. We are aware that a large number of potential funders with more limited research budgets also exist, where a joint call would be inappropriate for the number of grants likely to be funded; the Healthcare Partnerships scheme provides a unique opportunity for EPSRC to engage with these.

3. Scope of the Call

The scope for this call has been developed through a process of consultation which has included discussions with academics, users and members of our Healthcare Strategic Advisory Team.

Consistent with the main purpose of the Healthcare Partnerships scheme, non-academic partners will be limited to smaller organisations. For industry partners, the focus will be on SMEs, using the EU definition of not more than 250 employees with an annual turnover not exceeding €50M and/or an annual balance sheet not exceeding €43M. Charities will be limited to organisations with an annual UK spend of £1M - £10M. Bids involving more than one non-academic partner are acceptable, particularly where they are complementary in nature e.g. representing some form of supply chain, and the total cash contribution in these cases will remain a minimum total cash contribution of £10k. In addition to a cash contribution the non-academic partner(s) would be expected to play an active role in the management of research projects and this should be described in the research proposal. Involvement of non-academic partners in drafting full proposals, particularly management plans and impact statements, is encouraged.

The projects supported through this call will be high quality, long-term basic research projects, with results placed in the public domain, for example through publications. This distinguishes them from more applied research projects that might be supported by the Technology Strategy Board or Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. In this context, the exploitation route that the non-academic partner (s) could provide might typically consist of advice on project direction and a route for uptake of the research beyond the end of the project, thereby enhancing the likely impact of the research project. As EPSRC funded projects they would not be expected to include clinical trials.

Research proposals will need to demonstrate significant added value to existing work in the area outlined. In this context, it should be noted that EPSRC has already funded a considerable amount of collaborative research in the field of cancer imaging and medical devices(<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Programmes/Healthcare/RecentInitiatives.htm>).

Partnerships with larger organisations, although precluded by this scheme, will still be welcomed by EPSRC for example through responsive mode.

4. Eligibility

This call is open to academics in UK research organisations that must be eligible to hold Research Council grants and be working with at least one non-academic partner.

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide:
<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/HowToApply/FundingGuide.htm>.

As this call is a targeted funding opportunity provided by EPSRC, higher education institutions, research council institutes and some independent research organisations are

eligible to apply. A list of eligible organisations to apply to EPSRC is provided at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/eligibility.htm>.

The host organisation should be made aware of any Expression of Interest submitted to EPSRC as this could lead to the support of a full proposal. EPSRC will be looking for reassurance of this through a letter of support, attached to the Expression of Interest, from your organisation.

5. Application Procedure

A two stage process will be used for this call: an Expression of Interest stage, followed by a Full Proposal stage. **Expressions of Interest** will be considered by a panel against the assessment criteria; (see section 7) those rated most highly will be invited to submit a full proposal. It is our intention to invite no more than twice as many full proposals as we expect to fund. Decisions will be communicated to applicants by November 11th 2009.

Expressions of Interest may be submitted by individual research groups or by a number of groups, either within a single university or across a number of universities. Expressions of Interest should be submitted electronically (in virus-free Word or pdf format) to healthcare@epsrc.ac.uk. Please include "Healthcare Partnerships" in the subject field.

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 (<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/HowToApply/default.htm>) which should be consulted when preparing all proposals. EPSRC's guidance on collaborative research (<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/Business/Guidance/default.htm>) may also be useful towards for this call. Details of the expected format of Expressions of Interest is provided in Section 8.

Applicants that progress to the **Full Proposal stage** will be invited to submit full proposals through Je-S by 7th January 2010. More detailed guidance on the application procedure for the second stage will be communicated to successful applicants as part of the invitation to submit.

6. Assessment Procedure

The overall assessment procedure is a two stage process, an Expression of Interest stage and a Full Proposal stage. Only applicants who are successful at the Expression of Interest stage will be invited to submit at the Full Proposal stage. Successful applicants will be sent specific information on how to apply.

Expressions of Interest will be considered by a panel in November 2009.

Full proposals will be sent to anonymous peer reviewers for their comments. Those full proposals which receive sufficiently supportive reviewer comments will be considered by a Full Proposal panel. The Full Proposal panel may involve interviews with applicants but this will be confirmed when decisions are communicated in November 2009. It is expected that the Full Proposal panel meeting will be held in the middle of March 2010 and that decisions will be available at the end of March 2010. The deadline for full proposals invited through the Expression of Interest stage will be the 7th January 2010.

7. Assessment criteria

The primary criteria for assessment will be, in no particular order of priority:

- Fit to the scope of the call;
- The degree of excellence of the research proposal, with reference to:
 - The novelty; alignment to healthcare need; and timeliness
 - Appropriateness of the proposed methodology
- The potential impact of the project, with reference to:
 - The nature of the potential impact (this could be improving quality of life)
 - The relevance and appropriateness of the collaborative partnership
 - An appropriate and viable path to exploitation
 - Appropriate and viable end user involvement (including patients, carers)
- The applicants' ability to deliver the proposed project, with reference to:
 - Appropriateness of the track record of the applicant(s)
 - Balance of skills of the project team
- The effectiveness of the proposed planning and management and whether the requested resources are appropriate

8. Format for Expressions of interest

The following information and documentation will need to be submitted as part of the Expression of Interest stage:

- A completed Expression of Interest form [Appendix 1]; the project summary section should contain an overview of the research proposed. All proposals including multi-institutional bids must be submitted on one single proposal form.
- Expression of Interest Case for Support – no more than three pages of A4, addressing the key assessment criteria as given in section 7.
- A letter of support from the applicants' host organisation (see Eligibility section)
- A letter of support from any project partner(s), for further guidance please see: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/Business/Guidance/LettersOfSupport.htm>

EPSRC reserves the right to reject proposals that are deemed to be outside the remit of the call or are not in the correct format, without reference to peer review.

9. Key dates

First tranche	
Closing date for submission of EoIs	20 th October 2009
Decisions on EoIs	11 th November 2009
Closing date for submission of full proposals	7 th January 2010
Full Proposal panel meeting	Mid March 2010
Decisions on proposals	End March 2010
Second tranche (indicative dates)	
Closing date for submission of EoIs	May/ June 2010
Third tranche (indicative dates)	
Closing date for submission of EoIs	September/October 2010

10. Further Information

- As indicated in the Introduction section, EPSRC is planning to release further calls for Healthcare Partnerships in 2010. Some indicative dates are suggested under Key Dates above. We do not expect the scope and process to change significantly but it is possible that some priority areas may be signposted in future calls. The detailed scope, application and assessment information will be provided through the release of future call documents.
- EPSRC expects that the individual funded projects will be monitored on a regular basis in partnership with the non-academic collaborator(s). The scheme will be subject to an initial review after 18 months of operation.

11. Network Funding

In addition to funding for Healthcare Partnership proposals, the Towards Next Generation Healthcare Programme would welcome proposals for network grants to help support the development of collaborative proposals through new partnerships for future calls. Please refer to Section 4 for **Eligibility for EPSRC funding**.

Submission of Network Applications:

Applications should be submitted 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 'Standard Proposal' and the 'Network' Scheme. On the Project Details page you should select the 'HP Networks' Call. The form should be accompanied by the following documents:

- Previous track record (2 sides)
- Case for support (6 sides)
- Impact plan (up to 2 sides)
- Justification of resources (1 side)
- Diagrammatic work plan (1 side)

Please refer to the general Network guidance on the EPSRC website (<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Opportunities/Networking/Networks/default.htm>) for details of funding, eligibility and best practice guidance. Proposals can be submitted at any time throughout the duration of Phase 1 of the initiative [**up until 4pm on 2nd March 2010**].

Assessment of Network Proposals:

Network proposals that fit the scope of the initiative will be assessed through postal peer review. The form that is currently used to assess Network proposals can be found on the EPSRC website: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/Forms/Reviewers/NetworkGrantsRF.htm>. Proposals will be assessed against the criteria listed in the context of the Healthcare Partnerships scheme, which aims to build academic/non-academic partnerships around important healthcare issues. EPSRC expects to be able to make internal funding decisions based on postal peer review but reserves the right to send to an appropriate peer review panel if further funding advice is needed.

12. Contact details

If you have any queries about this call please contact:

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**HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIPS
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM**

Please refer to the Healthcare Partnerships call document before submitting this form.

Closing date	First tranche call - closes noon on 12 th October 2009
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The Research Organisation

Applicant Details	
Principal Investigator:	
University:	
Division or Department:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	

Project Partner/s

[A letter of support must be provided for each partner]

Charity Partner Details	
Collaborating Organisation:	
Division or Department:	
Principal Contact Name:	
Job Title:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	
Industry Partner Details	
Collaborating Organisation:	
Division or Department:	
Principal Contact Name:	
Job Title:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	

Track record	

Project Title	<i>No longer than 150 characters</i>

Project Summary	<i>No longer than 4000 characters</i>

Project Length (in months)	
Proposed Start Date	

Grant Amount Requested	<i>Provide an estimate of the funding required., Fully Justified resources will be required as part of the Full Application</i>
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Summary of Resources Required for Project			
Summary fund heading	Full Economic Cost £	EPSRC Contribution £	% EPSRC Contribution
Directly Incurred			80
Directly Allocated			80
Indirect Costs			80
Exceptions			100
Total requested from EPSRC			

Collaborating Organisation/s Contribution	Provide details and value of the cash support from project partner/s (a minimum of £10k is required)

Other Additional Funding	Provide details of any other funding that will be provided including the amount and the source of funds