‘Global Challenges Research Fund: Networks in Vaccine R&D’

Expression of Interest Call text

Application Timeline

Expression of Interest deadline: 09 November 2016, 5pm
Call for full proposals opens (invite only): mid-January 2017 tbc
Full proposal deadline (invite only): 09 February 2017, 5pm
Start date: Networks will have a latest start of 01 July 2017

Summary

The Medical Research Council (MRC) and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) are pleased to announce a £8 million call for Networks in Vaccine R&D.

This call forms part of the Research Councils’ activities under the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and therefore requires Networks to address research challenges primarily relevant to the health or prosperity of Countries on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) DAC List. The Networks supported through this call will contribute to the UK Government’s commitment to Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Network Management, Membership and Activities

The Network will be run by a Network Director (Principal Investigator) who can be assisted by ONE Network Deputy Director (Co-Investigator). It is expected that the day-to-day management of the Network will be performed by a suitably qualified Network Manager.

It is anticipated that the Network will include members from countries on the OECD DAC list and have membership from a range of relevant academic disciplines including biological, medical, environmental, economic and social sciences, where these add value. Networks should also seek to engage stakeholders, end-users and policy makers.

Networks should include a range of activities and mechanisms to deliver the aims of the call. Plans for the governance structure, including the development, assessment and monitoring of membership and catalyst support, including pump-priming funding, will be an essential component of the Expression of Interest and full proposal.

Networks are expected to grow and develop from the original proposal, and have open membership, however MRC is advising that Networks carefully consider how membership is managed; its breadth and potential to add value to the core aims of the Network and developing the Network scope into new areas being key considerations.
Funding

MRC and BBSRC have ring-fenced up to £8M for this call, with a view to funding a small number of multidisciplinary Networks for up to £2M each and up to four years in duration, focusing on clearly articulated challenges relating to the early research and development of LMIC relevant vaccines.

Applicants should apply for funds to support: (1) Management (including costs for appropriate salaries for Principal and Co-Investigator, Network Manager and administration costs); (2) catalyst activities, to include the cost of pump-priming innovative research addressing the vaccine R&D challenges, and (3) Network activities, for any dissemination, collaboration building, exchange, training, events, and other related costs.

At EOI stage, applicants must provide top level figures for funds required to support the above activities, but are not required to provide a detailed justification of resources in the Expression of Interest. However, applicants should describe why a Network of the proposed scale is justified.

GCRF

The GCRF is a new 5-year, £1.5Bn resource funding stream, announced as part of the 2015 spending review, to ensure that UK research takes a leading role in addressing the problems faced by developing countries. The GCRF will deploy the UK’s world-class research capability to address the challenges faced by the developing world. The GCRF forms part of the UK’s ODA activities which are monitored by the OECD.

All activities funded through the GCRF Networks in Vaccines R&D will form part of the UK’s ODA activities. Therefore, Network proposals submitted to this call should clearly demonstrate how the primary purpose of the Network will be to promote the economic development and welfare of countries on the OECD’s DAC list of ODA recipients (available at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC List of ODA Recipients 2014 final.pdf (PDF)). Guidance on ODA definitions and interpretation is available in the OECD factsheet ‘Is it ODA?’ (PDF).

Please note that it is anticipated that Antigua & Barbuda, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Venezuela will graduate from the DAC list in 2017.

Eligibility

MRC is the lead Research Council for this call - as such, standard MRC eligibility criteria apply for Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators. The Network Director (Principal Investigator) must be an eligible UK-based applicant from an institution eligible to receive Research Council funding. Information about eligibility criteria can be found in our grants guide, and on the RCUK website.

Once funded, Networks must be open to new value adding members. Networks are encouraged to include collaborators from countries on the OECD DAC list, and have membership from a range of relevant academic disciplines and industry members, where these partnerships add value.
How to apply

There is a two stage application and assessment process:

1. Expressions of Interest (EOI) – offline, via email vaccinology@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk
2. Full proposals – via Je-S

Only proposals submitted as an EOI can be submitted as a Full – if invited by the Assessment Panel.

This document contains instructions for completing, and submitting the Expression of Interest application.

Expressions of Interest:

Expressions of Interests must be submitted by 17:00 on 09 November 2016. No late submissions will be accepted.

EOIs must be submitted to the inbox vaccinology@rcuk.ac.uk

In addition, applicants must submit

- Amalgamated PDF of CVs for all named applicants (2 page CV + 1 page publications)
- Amalgamated PDF of letters of support from relevant industrial collaborator(s), University Departments and additional potential Network members

Applicants can additionally choose to submit an attachment with figures that support the application (e.g. preliminary data for exemplar projects, Network organogram, Gantt Chart, etc) – maximum two sides of A4.

Therefore there should be a minimum of three or total of four attachments to all applications sent to the vaccinology@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk mail box

At a minimum, font size 11 in Arial should be used for the EOI and CVs.

Assessment criteria for Expression of Interest phase

The purpose of the Expression of Interest phase is to:

- Provide constructive strategic and practical feedback to assist applicants with building a compelling full proposal
- Ensure alignment with ODA requirements
- Assess the number, scope, scale and ambition of the proposals
- Provide the funders with an opportunity to work iteratively with applicants to ensure that complementary rather than duplicative proposals are submitted. Where duplication exists the funders are likely to recommend that communities work together rather than separately.

Proposals that do not meet the ODA requirements and/or address the aims of the call will not be invited to submit full proposals.
The specific criteria - aligned to the sections of the EOI form - that your proposal will be judged on are:

**Part 2: Applicant Details**

- Is the lead applicant from an eligible RO?

**Part 3: ODA**

- **Relevance to Official Development Assistance**
  - Does the Network proposal clearly address a vaccine R&D challenge of relevance to countries on the OECD DAC list?
  - Does the proposal clearly demonstrate that the primary purpose of the Network is to promote the economic development and/or welfare of developing countries on the OECD DAC list?
  - Where there is value-add, does the proposal articulate the case for any work to be carried out, or partnerships based in LMIC countries?

**Part 4: Network Vision, Deliverables, Strategy and Budget**

- **Overall ‘Vision for the Network in Vaccine R&D’ case - fit to the aims and scope of the call**
  - Does the Network address a key scientific challenge in vaccine R&D?
  - Does the Network aim to build an interdisciplinary community by drawing in researchers from a range of relevant disciplines and engaging relevant stakeholders including those from developing countries?

- **Deliverables**
  - Does the application articulate a strong case for their approach having impact and leading to genuine insights in vaccine R&D?

- **Strategy**
  - Does the application make a strong case for the suitability of funding format to this science area and how this will help deliver the potential and build the area?
  - Does the Network describe a compelling and synergistic set of plans spanning management, catalyst and network activities
  - Are the exemplar projects described in the proposal of high scientific potential?
  - Are the Network activities proposed likely to support members and lead to novel insights, projects, and sustainable collaborations?
  - Does the proposal clearly articulate what the added value of the proposed Network will be above and beyond existing activities?

- **Proposed Budget**
  - Does the EOI detail reasonable and realistic resource requests?
  - Is the overall scale of the request reasonably justified?

**Part 3: Network Leadership, Membership and Management**

- **Strength of the team**
  - Does the PI have the appropriate expertise to lead the proposed Network?
  - Are there appropriate value-adding founding members in place and will these add synergistic value?
• Demonstration of a clear Network management structure
  o Does the proposal clearly articulate how the Network will be managed?
    ▪ Does the proposal clearly describe the roles of Director/Co-Director, Network Manager and Management Board and how will they work together?
    ▪ Does the proposal identify the expertise that will be needed on the Management Board?

• Demonstration of a clear governance structure for catalysts activities, including the management of pump-priming funds - how projects will be developed, assessed and monitored
  o Does the proposal identify a mechanism for developing, assessing and monitoring the pump-priming projects?

• Network Outreach Plans: Demonstration of a coherent plan for building an interdisciplinary community
  o Does the proposal identify how it will engage members with a range of expertise and experience including students and postdocs?
  o Does the proposal articulate how the Network will engage researchers and stakeholders from developing countries?
  o Does the proposal identify a range of networking activities such as meetings, workshops etc which will be used to build linkages between different communities?
  o Does the proposal clearly articulate how the Network will remain ‘open’ and engage new membership over the duration of the Network?

Contact

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