



**FDCO/MRC/Wellcome
Health Systems Research Initiative
In collaboration with ESRC**

Research Grant Outline Stage Guidance: Call 8

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1. Important information

Research Grants are focused projects, typically 3 years in duration and up to a maximum of 5 years. There are no set budget limits; small and larger-scale projects are invited. As a guide, applicants should note that approximately £4m is available for Research Grants under this call and value for money is an important part of the assessment criteria.

Funding for projects awarded under this call for proposals is provided by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Wellcome, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

MRC administer the call for proposals on behalf of the funders and so all applications should be submitted to the MRC and will be awarded according to [UKRI Terms and Conditions](#).

General information about how to apply to the MRC can be found in the [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#). Where guidance in the present document differs from that in the standard guidance, you should follow the direction in this present, scheme specific, document.

Please complete the proposal in English and use British Pounds Sterling for all costs.

The submission deadline for outline grants is: 16:00 GMT on 19th January 2021.

All proposals must have a Principal Investigator (PI) based at either an eligible UK Research Organisation (RO) or an eligible RO in a low- or middle-income country (LMIC). It will be the ROs hosting the successful PIs that receive the funding and manage distribution of the funding to any Co-Investigator RO(s). PIs from high income countries outside the UK are not eligible to apply for this scheme.

The application/review process in summary

Research Grant proposals will undergo a 2-stage assessment process:

1. Outline grant application deadline: 16:00 GMT 19th January 2021.
2. Panel meeting of academic experts: mid-March 2021.
3. Successful applicants will be notified and given Panel feedback in April 2021 to be incorporated into full stage applications.
4. Full application deadline: 16th June 2021.
5. Full stage applications will be sent out for external peer review and the applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to those comments in September 2021.
6. Panel meeting of academic experts: October 2021
7. Decisions to be relayed in early November 2021.

Queries should be sent to HSRI@mrc.ukri.org

2. Who can apply?

The intellectual challenge should be the determining factor when configuring appropriate partnerships and collaborations. Proposals must demonstrate equitable partnerships in line with the UK Collaborative on Development Research report '[Building Partnerships of Equals](#)'. The balance of intellectual leadership and costs between high income countries and LMICs will be considered in the assessment of proposals.

Research Organisation Eligibility

UK Principle Investigators (PIs) **must** be based at one of the following:

- Higher Education Institutions
- [Independent Research Organisation \(IRO\)](#)
- UK Government Funded Organisation (other than MRC funded Units and Institutes)
- MRC Units/Institutes
- University Units (former MRC Units)

For further information on UK eligibility for research funding see [eligibility](#).

LMIC PI's **must** be based at one of the following:

- Higher Education Institutions
- Non-profit Research Institutions

Co-Investigators (Co-Is) should follow the same eligibility rules as for PIs but in addition may be based at the following collaborating organisations:

- Local and national government departments based in LMICs
Any recognised local or national department of an LMIC, e.g. the Ministry of Health.
- International Intergovernmental Organisations based in LMICs: Any organisation with a footprint in an LMIC formed of member sovereign states established by treaty recognised under international law e.g. the World Health Organisation.

- Stakeholders based at not for profit organisations in LMICs with relevant expertise and research capacities to warrant their inclusion in the investigator team (for example – practitioners, grass roots organisations, policymakers)

Institutions based in China or India are no longer eligible to lead applications but are welcomed as collaborating organisations hosting Co-Investigators within applications. Collaborations with Co-Investigators from China or India must have global or regional development impact as the primary objective, with local or national impacts within China or India as secondary objectives. It is expected that Co-Investigators from China and India make a significant contribution to their own research costs, including covering their own overheads. Please note it is not possible for Co-Investigators from China or India to be hosted by local or national government departments, or by international intergovernmental organisations.

Applicants working in India and/or China who wish to apply are strongly advised to contact the office for guidance as early as possible.

Many non-UK institutions will not currently be recognised to hold UK Research and Innovation grants. Lead institutions which are not currently recognised will have to obtain recognition (further eligibility and financial checks) before any grant can be confirmed. In order to minimise administrative burdens and costs to both applicants and funders, formal recognition will only be pursued if the grant is successful.

If you are unsure about your organisation's eligibility, please consult the Programme Manager, by contacting: HSRI@mrc.ukri.org.

Principal Investigators (PIs)

This call differs from the [standard MRC rules](#) in that PIs can be based either in the UK (as per usual MRC rules) or in an eligible Low- or Middle Income Country.

Projects with PIs from LMICs are strongly encouraged and all proposals must include Co-Is from the LMIC in which the research is taking place. Funding is not dependant on the involvement of a UK-based research organisation. The PI is responsible for the intellectual leadership of the research and for the overall management of the project. The PI will be the funding agencies' main contact for the proposal.

Exceptions: applicants based in China or India are not eligible to be the PI of any application to this call but are welcomed as international Co-I's within proposals.

Applicants without experience of UK funding are encouraged to seek mentorship or guidance on grant writing from colleagues with experience of winning UK funding.

For administrative purposes when completing the Je-S form, you will only be able to list one PI. While there is formally only one PI, you can make it clear in your Case for Support that the scientific leadership is shared and that in this respect, the applicants listed are Co-Principal Investigators.

It is not permitted for the same person to be PI on more than one Research Grant application submitted at the outline stage. It is possible to submit one Research Grant application and one Foundation Grant application within the same round.

Please note, the PI is responsible for ensuring that each investigator's overseas research organisation has been successfully added to the Je-S database and has the required level of Je-S account.

Co-Investigators (Co-Is)

The PIs may be supported by a number of Co-Investigators (Co-Is) named on the application. The eligibility requirements for Co-Is are broader than those set out for the PI and are set out above under Research Organisation Eligibility.

Where appropriate, applications to this call are expected to include significant engagement with key stakeholders including implementing agencies within the LMIC(s) of focus. Where there is a significant level of engagement from individuals based in government agencies, international intergovernmental organisations and/or other organisations with relevant expertise, applicants should consider including them as part of the researcher team as a Co-I. By including these individuals as Co-Is their time on the project can be properly recognised, and reimbursement of their salary can be requested.

Investigators from high-income countries outside of the UK are not eligible to apply as PIs but can be named as Co-Is with justification for why the expertise they are providing cannot be found in the UK or an LMIC.

All Co-Is must be registered on the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System in advance of the submission deadline, information on how to register can be found in the MRC guidance for applicants.

Project Partner/s

In addition to the information provided in the [MRC guidance for applicants](#), we encourage applicants to involve key stakeholders (policy makers, implementers, patient/participant groups). Stakeholders who are not receiving funding from the project, or are providing a contribution in cash or in-kind, should be included as project partners.

Please note that PI and Co-I host organisations should not be listed as project partners on the application.

If the project partner listed is from industry, applicants must follow the MICA guidance. Applicants with an industrial partner(s) will need to include MICA: as a prefix to their project title. At the outline stage the input/involvement of the industry partner should be detailed in the Case for Support. Please refer to the guidance described below. Applicants invited to submit a full application need to include a MICA Form and Heads of Terms as part of their Je-S application.

3. Required documents for an outline application

Only applications submitted through Je-S will be recognised: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>

Applications must be submitted by the PI or their research organisation on behalf of the research team. Outline applications must include the following:

- A completed application form on Je-S: All investigators **must** be included. This form reflects the project costs so please include **all** costs, UK or otherwise. See '[Costs](#)' section for clarification.
- A jointly prepared Case for Support (see additional guidance below) must be uploaded as a Word or PDF attachment.

- CV's and publication lists must be uploaded for all named investigators as a Word or PDF attachment.

All attachments should be completed in 11-point Arial typeface, with a minimum of 2cm margins. Applications will not be accepted where smaller or narrow typefaces have been used. If you exceed the maximum page length or attach extraneous documents, we may reject your application or return your application to you for amendment.

The online Je-S form requests information such as administrative details of the Investigators, financial information and summaries of your research. We recommend that applicants access the Je-S form well in advance of the deadline so that they can see the specific information that they will need to enter and can ensure that they and their Co-Is are registered on the system. It is fine to copy information between your pdf attachments and the Je-S form where there is overlap in information requested.

Attachments

Mandatory Attachments	Conditions
Case for support	Four Sides of A4 (plus one for references)
CVs	Two sides of A4 per person
Publications	One side of A4 per person
Optional Attachments	Conditions
Letters of Support	Two sides of A4 per letter

At the outline stage you do not need to submit a Justification for Resources or a Data Management Plan, these will only be required to be completed by successful outline applicants, when they submit to stage two of the call with a full Research Grant application.

Case for Support

Please see [Section 4](#) of the Case for Support scheme specific guidance.

CVs and publications

Please submit a maximum of 3 pages per investigator: 2 pages CV and a 1-page publication list.

Please compile all the documents into one PDF file and include the documents in the same order as the investigators are listed on your Je-S application form. Each publication list should immediately follow its corresponding CV.

We must receive a CV for each of the following:

- Principal Investigators
- Co-investigators
- Named individual research staff

Please see [Section 2.2.1](#) and [Section 2.2.2](#) of the MRC Guidance for Applicants for the full details on the requirements for CVs and Publications.

Letters of Support

At the outline stage, letters of support can be included in the application where available. These letters should come from relevant academic and non-academic stakeholders such as local or national government authorities, other public sector actors and project partners (e.g. industrial partners, NGOs). Each letter of support should be no longer than **2 pages A4**.

Please see [Section 2.2.7](#) of the MRC Guidance for Applicants for the full details on the requirements for Letters of Support for Project Partners.

4. Case for Support scheme specific guidance

Your Case for Support is a document including your scientific proposal, details of the research environment, people involved and references. Your Case for Support should indicate how your proposal fits the call specification for this scheme.

Additional annexes are not permitted, this includes the reproducibility and statistical design annex. Any applications missing or exceeding the case for support page limit may be rejected. Any additional attachments will be removed from the view of the referees.

Please use the following headings:

Research Project summary information

- Full title of the project (no more than 150 characters)
- In which country(ies) the project will take place
- Duration in months
- Total amount requested from this funding scheme
- Principal health systems research question to be addressed

Health Systems relevance and importance: why is this research needed now and in this proposed location?

- What evidence is there that the answer to your research question is needed and wanted by relevant users, for instance, policy-makers, research users and decision makers?

Please consider issues such as burden of disease and priority for local, regional and national health systems and how this research will strengthen local health systems. Proposals must outline why the research is important to the particular LMIC context and engage with context specific academic and non-academic stakeholders. You must demonstrate knowledge of relevant health systems empirical literature, particularly from LMICs where relevant and propose how this research may contribute to this literature. Please ensure that the proposal clearly addresses a health system research question rather than, for example, only evaluating the effects of a specific health service intervention.

Theoretical Framework

Please describe how your research questions and methodologies are embedded within a suitable theoretical framework with reference to relevant scholarly literature. This framework could draw from any of the appropriate disciplines (economics, sociology, anthropology, political science etc.) and should demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to your research focus. Where appropriate, proposals should also outline what contribution this research will make to an advance in theoretical knowledge.

Project and methodology description

Please describe your proposed research project, ensuring that you cover the following points:

- Where will the research take place and why this site(s)/context(s)?
- Who will the research participants be and why?
- What questions will be addressed and what are your research plans to address those questions?
- Give details of the methodological approaches, study design and techniques that will be used.
- Enough detail must be given to show why the research is likely to be competitive in its field.
- Particular care should be taken to explain any innovation in the methodology or where you intend to develop new methods.
- Please describe why your proposed methodology is the most appropriate and innovative way of addressing the research question.
- What pilot or preliminary information do you have available to help the panel assess the feasibility of the proposed study? Costly and complex studies are welcomed but applicants should ensure that research questions remain tight and focused and that a potential Panel would be confident any large study could be managed effectively in the field.
- If you are testing delivery of an intervention, please be clear about what that intervention will consist of and why. How would delivery of the intervention relate to the broader health system and contribute to health systems strengthening.
- Consider how the findings from the proposed study, especially if it has a single disease focus, may inform work on other related conditions or diseases.
- If the research involves data collection or acquisition you must demonstrate that you have carried out a datasets review, and explicitly state why currently available datasets are inadequate for the proposed research.
- What is the proposed timeline?
- How will you evaluate the outcomes of the study?

If your methodology is an RCT, please contact HSRI@mrc.ukri.org to discuss the eligibility of your study for this scheme. While RCT's are accepted it will be important to demonstrate how your proposed work is embedded in and relates to the wider health system in the proposed context.

Applicants should note that the MRC, FCDO, National Institute for Health Research and Wellcome currently fund a scheme for randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in LMICs. For further information please visit the webpage for this scheme: <https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/science-areas/international-and-global-health-research/funding-partnerships/joint-global-health-trials/>

Research project team

- How does the team of investigators incorporate the range of discipline and experience necessary to carry out the study?
- To what extent is this application led and/or informed by LMIC researchers?
- Please ensure budget breakdowns between high income and LMIC researchers are appropriate with the aims of the scheme.
- Where numerous investigators are involved, applicants should consider appropriate management structures/advisory groups.
- How can the host institution demonstrate that it has the facilities and resources available to manage the study?

Capacity building

All funders are committed to strengthening research capacity within LMICs and the UK. Grants funded through this scheme are expected to contribute to the development of equitable and

sustainable global research systems. Applicants are encouraged to start discussing priorities as early as possible, in consultation with key stakeholders within and outside of the project team (for example - researchers, data collectors, managers, practitioners, grass roots organisations, policymakers and research management offices). The proposed approach to capacity building will be assessed as part of the review process and will help to demonstrate the equity of the partnership. Examples of capacity building include, but are not limited to:

- Building leadership skills amongst early career researchers
- Opportunities for mutual learning across the project team (such as through staff exchanges), for example, in the subject of the research, the context where it is being conducted, engagement with policy-makers and research management
- Building capacity to working collaboratively, across disciplines and across practice-research boundaries (for example with policy-makers, managers and practitioners in the system)
- Providing mentoring to improve the capacity of less experienced researchers to generate new knowledge and attain policy impact
- Team members attending training courses to develop specific expertise or obtain relevant qualifications (excluding Masters and PhDs)
- Opportunities for staff and associated health managers to author/co-author journal and conference papers and participate in national and international conferences
- Building organisational capacity, (for example in management, finance or communications)
- Formation of LMIC research networks.

Successful proposals will also demonstrate a strong understanding of the local research context and ensure the research programme does not undermine local research capacity.

Research impact: How will the results of this study be used?

- What changes might be implemented as a result of the study?
- Who will make those changes happen and how?
- Might the results be generalizable beyond the immediate research setting?
- Please describe how this research will engage with in-country actors such as academic and non-academic stakeholders and policy makers. Research engagement strategies should reflect stakeholder priorities and any interventions that require government buy-in should demonstrate engagement with public sector actors.

Ethics

It is essential that applicants describe the ethical considerations that have informed the proposed research. Details of the ethical review and research governance arrangements that would apply to the proposal must be described.

Financial Information

- Are other funding partners involved? Who are the partners and what is the status of the discussions?

In addition to the costings you have provided on Je-S, please provide a breakdown of the funding request per institution using the below table.

Organisation name	Total project costs (GBP)	Total cost requested from this scheme (GBP)*

* UK institution costs are calculated at 74% of the Full Economic Costs. Costs incurred outside of the UK are 'Exceptions' and can be claimed at 100%.

Proposal History

Has an application for funding for this project been submitted previously to FCDO, ESRC, MRC, Wellcome or another funding organisation? If so, please indicate the status of the previous application. If your project has been previously submitted to FCDO, ESRC, MRC or Wellcome please contact the MRC in advance of submission to request approval for a resubmission. Please include in your e-mail a description of how you have revised the project design since your last submission, and, if you previously received feedback, please include a response to each feedback point.

Further information that may be useful can be found in the MRC guidance for applicants. Where guidance in the present document differs from that in the standard guidance, you should follow the direction in this present, scheme specific, document.

5. The Je-S application

All proposals submitted to this scheme are required to include investigators based in the LMIC(s) where the research will take place.

All Overseas ROs/Institutes and individual applicants (PI and Co-Is), are required to be registered on the Je-S system. Please note that a self-registration process is available for overseas organisations to follow from the [Je-S login page](#), or alternatively by following this direct link to the [Je-S organisation set-up page](#).

Both UK organisations and overseas organisations are encouraged to contact the Je-S helpdesk as soon as possible before the call deadline of the 19th January 2021, so we can ensure that the overseas organisation (either Lead or Non-lead), has been correctly added to the Je-S System. Any delays could mean the proposal being rejected because of late or incomplete submission.

Please login to your Je-S account using the username and password you have chosen.

If you do not have a Je-S account, or have forgotten your password, please see the following guidance:

- New Je-S Users: In order to gain access to the Je-S System, [Create an Account](#).
- Je-S users having problems successfully completing login to their Je-S account: [Retrieve User Name / Password](#).
- Select '**Documents**' from left hand menu list from your Je-S account home page
- Select '**New Document**' from within the Functions/create section of your documents page

Please telephone Je-S Helpdesk +44 (0) 1793 444164 should you require any assistance with the Je-S System.

Creating your Je-S application

Please note that all MRC funding calls close at 4pm (16:00 GMT), on the advertised closing date.

- Select Council: **MRC**
- Select Document Type: **Outline Proposal**
- Select Scheme: **MRC Jointly Funded Initiatives Outline**
- Select Call/Type/Mode (optional): **Joint Health Systems Research Initiative Call - Outline January 2021**
- Select 'Create Document' option

Je-S Add New Document High Contrast Help Report Problem Log Out Automatic logout in 1:59:39

To find the council, document type and scheme combination for a particular call please use the call search.

Call Search (opens in a new window)

Select Council:
MRC

Select Document Type:
Outline Proposal

Select Scheme:
MRC Jointly Funded Initiatives Outline

Select Call/Type/Mode (optional):
Joint Health Systems Research Initiative Call - Outline Jan 2021

Copy existing document?

Create Document Cancel

Please note for the outline stage we ask that you provide your substantive information for the proposal in your case for support and that you leave the following boxes on the form blank:

Objectives:

To minimise the work for applicants at the outline stage, please complete this section as 'Please see Case for Support'

Summary:

To minimise the work for applicants at the outline stage, please complete this section as 'Please see Case for Support'

Entering costs in Je-S

UK investigator research costs (including overseas travel) will be funded at 74% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC). This differs from the MRC's standard 80% to reflect the varying policies of the joint funders. Please see section 5. Resources – Full Economic Costing in the [Guidance for Applicants](#) for information on FEC.

Research costs incurred by overseas ROs and investigators is eligible to be funded at 100% of FEC.

Please note that research teams should consider the breakdown of budgets between UK/high income costs and LMIC costs, keeping in mind the aims of the scheme.

Funding for non-UK research institutions that have not previously received funding from MRC will be dependent on further eligibility and financial checks, to be conducted if the proposal is selected for funding. For further advice on eligibility, please contact HSRI@mrc.ukri.org.

The screenshot below is taken from Je-S which will summarise the costs entered for your proposal. **It is important that before submitting your proposal that costs are checked.** All costs outside the UK must be entered as 'Exceptions'. Costs related to the UK elements of the proposal (if applicable) must be entered as either 'Directly Incurred', 'Directly Allocated' or 'Indirect Costs'. Please read on for more detail on the funding available.

The screenshot shows the 'Resource Summary' page in the Je-S system. The page header includes the MRC logo and 'Medical Research Council'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home: Documents: Document List: With Owner'. The page contains a navigation menu on the left, a set of document actions (Document Actions, Cancel, Prev, Save, Next), and a form for entering project details (Scheme, Project Title, Organisation, Department). The main content is a table for entering costs, with columns for Summary Fund Heading, Full Economic Cost £, MRC Contribution £, and % MRC Contribution. The rows are: Directly Incurred (74%), Directly Allocated (74%), Indirect Costs (74%), Exceptions (100%), and Total requested from MRC (Je-S will display the total here). Below the table are two more rows for 'Total cash contribution from Project Partners' and 'Total in-kind contribution from Project Partners'.

Summary Fund Heading	Full Economic Cost £	MRC Contribution £	% MRC Contribution
Directly Incurred	<input type="text"/>		74 %
Directly Allocated	<input type="text"/>		74 %
Indirect Costs	<input type="text"/>		74 %
Exceptions	<input type="text"/>		100 %
Total requested from MRC	Je-S will display the total here		
Total cash contribution from Project Partners	<input type="text"/>		
Total in-kind contribution from Project Partners	<input type="text"/>		

Fund types

At the outline stage applicants are required to detail the funding requested under four headings detailed below. Full details of what costs should be covered under each heading can be found in the MRC guidance for applicants. The following specifies how overseas costs should be entered compared to costs incurred in the UK.

Directly Incurred

UK costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project. Charged to projects as the cash value actually spent and supported by an auditable record.

Directly Allocated

UK costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. Charged to projects based on estimates. Do not represent directly auditable costs on a project-by-project basis.

Indirect Costs

UK RO overhead costs and should not include any overseas costs.

Exceptions

All overseas costs. Exceptions costs will be funded at 100% FEC.

Overseas costs

It is expected that all applications to the Board will include overseas costs, it is not necessary to discuss these costs with a programme manager before submission.

All costs requested by an overseas organisation should be entered under the exceptions heading and requested at 100% FEC.

For overseas PI's and Co-I's all travel and subsistence costs can be claimed at 100%. For overseas institutions, all other exceptional costs associated with the overseas organisation should be claimed under the appropriate fund heading as “**exceptions**” and entered as “**Other Directly Incurred Costs**”. These include consumables, consultancy fees, field work fees, equipment (under £10,000) and subcontracting.

MRC will support indirect and estates costs for organisations based in low- and middle-income countries participating in the project. Each LMIC RO can request indirect costs up to the value of 20% of their direct costs. At the outline stage these costs should be entered as exceptions.

MRC will support 100% of the direct costs of researchers based in high incomes countries outside of the UK, as well as researchers based in China or India. No indirect or estates costs can be claimed. These costs should be included within the Exceptions costs section and should not exceed 30% of the proposal total.

Further costing guidance

UK ROs are not eligible to request costings for access publishing charges (APCs) or other types of publication in respect of peer reviewed research articles (including review articles not commissioned by publishers) and conference proceedings that acknowledge funding from the MRC as these costs are supported through block grants to UK HEIs, approved independent research organisations and research council institutes. **LMIC RO's can include the aforementioned costs, both when they lead a proposal and when they are involved in a proposal.** These costs should be budgeted under 'Exceptions' at 100% FEC.

If an Investigator does not need to cost their total time allocation to the proposal (i.e. some or all of their salary is already covered), it is important to ensure that their time allocation is accurately reflected as this will form part of the assessment to determine the feasibility of conducting the study. There is a separate section for hours worked and hours charged (costed) when completing the Je-S form. This can be found on the Investigator section in the main document menu in Je-S.

For further Je-S guidance for completing the 'Resource Summary' please refer to the [Je-S guidance page](#).

Submitting your application

Please ensure you comply with your research organisation's rules with regards to application submission.

The deadline for submission to the MRC is 16:00 19th January 2021. You may need to submit your proposal to colleagues within your research organisation several days before the deadline so that they have time to approve the proposal for submission to the MRC.

Once you have completed the 'Project Details' section of the Je-S form you are able to find out the submission arrangements for your organisation (which will vary depending on how the account is set up). **Select 'Document Actions' and then select 'Show Submission Path':**

- If the screen shows **'With Owner'** and **'With Council'**, then the proposal will be submitted directly by you (the PI).
- If the screen shows **'With Owner'** and **'Submitter Pool'** (there should be names listed against this section) and **'With Council'**, then the proposal has to be approved and submitted by one of your RO's named submitters. You should allow at least 48 hours for them to do this, your RO may require longer, and we would strongly advise that you check this.

Please check that at least one of your organisation's named submitters will be available on the day you plan to submit. Please note that they will need to do this no later than 16.00 GMT UK time on 19th January 2021.

6. Review process and Assessment Criteria

General information on the MRC's approach to peer review is provided in the [MRC Guidance for Applicants document](#).

There is a two-stage application process for this call. Applicants are initially invited to submit outline proposals, which will be assessed by an outline review panel. Those selected at the outline review panel will be invited to submit full applications, which will undergo external peer review and be reviewed by a full panel.

The outline review panel for this scheme will consider whether outline applications are of world-class standard (being intellectually innovative, well-focused and methodologically sound), and whether the research has the potential to make real improvement to health outcomes in LMICs.

Panel members will be asked to comment on the following criteria in assessing the outline proposals:

Research Quality

- Scientific Rationale: novelty, importance and timeliness of the research and whether this is likely to lead to new understanding;
- Has the proposal outlined a need and justification for the proposed research area and situated the work within an existing body of literature?
- Has the proposal demonstrated engagement with relevant theoretical frameworks?

Impact

- Will this research generate evidence on how to strengthen and improve health systems for people living in LMICs?
- Has this research used a health systems approach to inform the delivery of evidence-based interventions or structural changes? Proposals must demonstrate how interventions relate to and affect wider elements of a health system such as governance, financing, health workforce, information systems, service delivery etc.

- Will this research provide evidence that is of direct relevance to decision makers and practitioners in the field?
- Has the proposal identified potential barriers to uptake of the research outcomes in the setting and proposed plans to overcome these?
- Has this proposal identified key factors relevant to the potential scalability of the research?

Research Management and People

- The suitability of the investigator group including track record(s) of the individuals in their field(s) and whether they are best-placed to deliver the proposed research.
- How have team members from different disciplines been included and how has their variety of input been embedded in the approach to research?
- The management strategy proposed, including equitable access to any shared resources and sufficient capability and time commitments of senior staff to steer and oversee the research.
- Links with local research/health institutions and involvement of investigators from LMIC countries;
- Have opportunities for research capacity building been embedded into research plans?

Methodology

- The feasibility of experimental plans, statistics, methodology and design, including provision of sample size calculations, strategies to avoid bias, and preliminary data where appropriate;
- Is the design of the study appropriate to answer the question?
- Is the timeline realistic and achievable?
- Has the methodology been underpinned by a relevant theoretical or conceptual framework?

Ethics

- Comments on ethical and/or research governance issues, including whether proposed research is ethically acceptable and the appropriateness of ethical review and research governance arrangements.

Data Management Plan

- Is there is a sound plan for managing the research data, taking into account the types, scale and complexity of data being (or to be) managed and also the likely long-term value for further research including by sharing data.

Resources Requested

- Does the proposed research demonstrate good value for money?
- Are the funds requested essential and justified by the importance and scientific potential of the research?

7. Contacts

Enquiries should be sent to HSRI@mrc.ukri.org.

8. Data Protection

Privacy Notice

All personal data provided to the MRC as part of UK Research and Innovation via the Je-S form will be processed in accordance with current UK data protection legislation. Please see [Je-S Terms and Conditions](#) for guidance on how personal data collected from applicants is used. Further information on how we use personal data can also be found in the [UK Research and Innovation Privacy Notice](#).

Information on the terms and conditions that guide the general management of funded grants can be found in the [MRC's Guidance for Applicants](#).

What will be shared and with whom?

As the Global Health Systems Initiative scheme is a jointly funded scheme, information will be shared between the partners, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Wellcome.

Retention policy

The data that you provide will be held securely in accordance with the MRC IT and Records Management policies. It will be retained in accordance with the Medical Research Council's disposition schedule for the following schedules:

Business process	Record type	Retention
10.1 Grants	Grant programme policy	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Grant programme board agenda, minutes and papers (e- volume/CD)	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Grant programme board assessment feedback	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Grant programme board administration and correspondence	3 years
10.1 Grants	Triage meeting agendas, minutes and papers	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Triage decision	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Application processing statistics and summaries	20 years
10.1 Grants	Successful applications	20 years
10.1 Grants	Unfunded applications (unsuccessful, withdrawn, not accepted)	3 years
10.1 Grants	Grant summary record (Siebel etc.)	Permanently
10.6 Research Management	Clinical trials oversight and monitoring information (incl. protocols and annual	Permanently

10.6 Research Management	Research management administration	3 years
10.6 Research Management	Systems training	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Information Systems manuals/guidance	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Induction material	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Council Operating Procedures/Standard	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Interfaces with other organisations	7 years
10.6 Research Management	Research Portfolio files	Permanently
12.1 Strategy	Research strategy	7 years
12.1 Strategy	Internal working groups	7 years
12.2 Evaluation	Corporate reports (scorecard, economic impact etc.)	Permanently
12.2 Evaluation	Data analysis and	Permanently
12.2 Evaluation	Commissioned evaluation	Permanently

Further information can be found on the [MRC Records Management Policy](#).

The retention periods cited are those in force at the time of writing and are subject to change due to periodic revision of the Medical Research Council's disposition schedule. Information about the retention periods currently in force may be obtained from the Medical Research Council by emailing Corporate@mrc.ukri.org. The data provided may also be aggregated and anonymised for the purposes of reporting and analysis.