MRC-AMED INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESEARCH COLLABORATION

CALL SPECIFIC MRC GUIDANCE FOR UK APPLICANTS

This guidance document is for UK applicants wishing to apply to the ‘MRC-AMED Infectious Disease Research Collaboration’ research call. This guidance supplements the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants. Please consult the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants for information such as preparing the budget for your proposal.

This call-specific guidance document provides additional information specific to this call. Where guidance in the present document differs from that in the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants, you should follow the guidance in this present, scheme specific, document.

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1. Important application information

The Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) and the UK Medical Research Council (UKRI MRC) are pleased to invite proposals to the UK-Japan collaborative research into infectious diseases. This jointly funded initiative is aimed at fostering collaborative links between researchers in the UK and Japan with a focus on infectious disease. We invite joint application (by parallel submission) from researchers based in the UK and Japan. The deadline for applications is 4th September 2019. Successful awards will be announced in December 2019.

**Aim**

The overarching aim of the UK-Japan collaborative initiative in infectious diseases is to provide bi-lateral support to biomedical and health researchers in the UK and Japan that will allow them to forge lasting collaborations. This initiative aims to strengthen existing links or foster new links that add value to research taking place in both countries. This is expected to be achieved by facilitating exchange and catalysing innovative synergy amongst collaborators and is particularly aimed at those who are in the early stages of their careers. Therefore, it is expected that applications will be made by eligible early career researchers or by established researchers who explicitly wish to encourage the career development of their postdoctoral researchers. It is hoped that the partnerships established through these awards will lead to the development of long-term collaborative research programmes that will be competitive for international funding.

**Objectives**

The objective is to provide bilateral support for up to eight, catalytic, innovative collaborative partnerships between researchers from Japan and UK. These will enable important synergy between researchers with shared or complementary interests.

Specific objectives that underpin the UK-Japan research collaborative initiative in infectious disease are to promote:

- partnerships between UK and Japan investigators in fields of biomedical, health and clinical research
- the exchange of scientists, particularly early career scientists,
- knowledge or methodology exchange,
- complementary access to facilities / resources / equipment
- stronger opportunity for collaborative research and catalyse further synergy

It is expected therefore that jointly planned collaborative UK-Japan partnership project applications will be submitted. Applications from early career researchers or from established researchers who wish to encourage their postdoctoral scientists career development are particularly invited.
**Scope**

This call aims to support early career researchers develop fruitful international collaborations in the field of **infectious diseases**. Within this broad field AMED-MRC would particularly like to encourage applications which tackle the more challenging issues of infectious diseases including i) priority viral outbreak pathogens; ii) research providing mechanistic insight into latency/persistence/resistance in infectious diseases; and iii) research exploring the host infection interface, particularly at key barrier sites eg blood-brain barrier

Research areas of interest include:

- the pathogenesis of lethal viruses, such as the Ebola virus, Lassa virus, or tick-borne viruses
- mechanistic insight on latent and persistent infections
- exploration of host infection interface eg central nervous system infections by blood-brain barrier failure, trans-placental infections or mucosal-gut barrier
- drug resistant pathogens
- development of new treatment measures, therapeutic agents, vaccines or therapeutic strategies concerning any of the above

The use of novel strategies, computational / informatics using ‘big data’ and multidisciplinary approaches or advanced techniques within a project are encouraged but should be well articulated.

**Application information**

Each joint project must include a Japanese principal investigator and a UK principal investigator. These Co-principal investigators (Co-PIs) will lead the submission in their respective country to their respective agency (AMED in Japan and MRC in UK). The Co-PIs should be eligible for the receipt of their respective agency funding.

UK and Japanese Co-PIs must apply in parallel to their respective funding agencies by 4th September 2019 for the funding component requested within their country. **Both Co-PIs must therefore submit an identical joint Case for Support written in English to the MRC and AMED.**

**UK applicants must submit to the MRC via the UKRI Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System.** The Je-S submissions must be received by 16:00 (BST) on the day of the deadline. UK applicants must complete all sections required within Je-S for a standard research council grant proposal. However, the Case for Support format and structure is specific to this call and must be prepared using the call specific template. Further guidance can be found in the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants as well as in this specific MRC UK Guidance for Applicants for this call.

**Start date and Duration**

The joint collaborative research projects must start on 1 January 2020. Projects shall be no longer than three years [thirty-six (36) months] in duration and have completed by 31 December 2022.
Please refer to the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants for information on what the UK starting procedure entails; please inform the relevant support staff in your organisation of this requirement to ensure the project starts on time.

**Funding available**

AMED and MRC will jointly provide bi-lateral support to intensify productive collaboration in infectious disease research between UK and Japan’s leading researchers. The MRC will fund the UK component of the proposal at the standard 80% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC), and AMED will fund the Japanese component of the proposal.

It is anticipated that eight awards will be jointly supported, and the total funding available to support these 8 projects over three years will be approximately £1.2 million = 180 million JPY (£600,000 from the MRC and 90 million JPY from AMED).

The maximum MRC (RC) contribution for any single project is £75,000 i.e each jointly planned UK-Japan project will receive a maximum award of (£75,000 at 80% FEC from MRC plus 11.25 million JPY from AMED in total for the three year period. (That is £25,000 MRC plus 3.75 million JPY AMED per annum, over the three year period.) The UK element of funding will not cover requests for capital items.

**Timetable**

- Call opens: 19th June 2019
- Closing date for proposals: 4th September 2019
- Evaluation of proposals: September-October 2019
- Joint funding decision: November 2019
- Grant awarded: December 2019
- Project start: 1st January 2020
2. Who can apply?

2.1 Types of research organisations (ROs)

The UK co-principal investigator (co-PI) MUST be based at one of the following, as per standard MRC eligibility criteria:

- Higher education institutions
- Independent research organisations
- Government funded organisations (other than MRC funded units and institutes)
- MRC units/institutes
- University units (former MRC units)

For the UK participants, standard UKRI eligibility criteria as described on the UKRI website will apply. Applications cannot be accepted from investigators in commercial organisations.

See MRC Guidance for Applicants for further details about eligible institutions. This call will follow standard MRC eligibility criteria.

The Japanese co-PI MUST be based at an eligible Research Organisation. Please follow guidance provided by AMED.

2.2 People named on the grant

Co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs)

Under this joint scheme there will be a UK co-PI and a Japanese co-PI. The expectation is that the UK co-PI and associated costs for UK research will be funded by the MRC, while the Japanese co-PI and associated costs for research in Japan will be funded by AMED.

The co-PIs are responsible for the intellectual leadership of the research project and for the overall management of the research. The co-PIs will be the funding agencies’ main contact for the proposal. For administrative purposes when completing the UK Je-S form, you will only be able to input one PI; this will need to be the UK co-PI. The Japan-based co-PI should be listed as a first named co-investigator (Co-I) on Je-S. Similarly, the Japan-based co-PI must be the PI on submissions made to AMED with UK co-listed as the first named Co-I.

See standard MRC Guidance for Applicants for further details about UK PI eligibility.

The UK and Japan-based Co-PIs may only submit one joint application to this scheme as co-PI.
Co-investigators (Co-Is)

The co-PIs may be supported by a number of UK and Japanese Co-Is named on the application. A Co-I will assist the PI in the management and leadership of the research project. **All UK and Japanese co-PIs and Co-Is MUST have verified Je-S accounts and must be added to the Je-S form under co-investigator.** Please see section 3.3, below, ‘Creating a Je-S application’ for information on how to add an organisation on Je-S.

While, it is essential that the Japanese co-PI and Co-Is are added to the Je-S form, Japanese costs should **not be** represented on the Je-S form.

**Please note:** The lead UK applicant should liaise with any non-UK based Co-investigators as early as possible in the application process to ensure that they set-up their verified Je-S account as a matter of priority. Co-Investigators without Je-S accounts should be encouraged to visit the Je-S website ([https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk](https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk)) to gain access to the Je-S System. Further information when creating a Je-S account can be found in section 3.3 of this document.
3. How to apply

3.1 Submission of application

For this initiative Co-PIs from Japan and UK must apply in parallel to their respective funding agencies for the funding component requested within each country. The Co-PIs should work together to write a single joint case for support providing full details of the work proposed in both the UK and Japanese components.

In Japan, submissions will be made to AMED through the online application system, e-Rad (http://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html) by 20:00 (Japanese Standard Time) on 4th of September, 2019.

UK applicants must submit to the MRC via the UKRI Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System. The Je-S submissions must be received by 16:00 (BST) on the day of the deadline. UK applicants must complete all sections required for a standard Research Council Grant proposal. Further guidance can be found in the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants as well as this scheme-specific Guidance for Applicants.

The following documents must be included in the UK application:

- **A completed on-line Je-S form.**
  - All UK and Japanese co-PIs and Co-Is MUST be included.
  - All sections must be completed. Please note that details for the following sections can be copied and pasted from the Case for Support attachment: Objectives, Summary/Technical Summary, Impact Summary
  - This form reflects the UK costs only, so while the Japanese investigators should be included in Je-S, no associated costs should be entered. (The UK costs must match the UK total in the Case for Support).
  - Project details: start date should be 1 January 2020.
- **A cover letter attachment (optional).**
- **A jointly prepared Case for Support attachment** utilising the Case for Support template for this call.

The following elements are included within the Case for Support so are **NOT** required to be uploaded to Je-S separately:

- Justification of Resources
- Pathways to Impact
- Data Management Plan
- CVs and publication lists

Please note that clicking ‘submit document’ initially submits the proposal to the UK institution’s administration, not to the MRC. Sufficient time must therefore be allowed for the submission process between submitting your proposal and the call closing date.

Failure to submit a valid application to both funders will invalidate both submissions.
3.2 The Joint UK Japan Case for Support

Using the template provided, a jointly prepared Case for Support written in English should be submitted by the Japan-based and UK Co-PIs as part of their application. Please follow the instructions in the Case for Support template and complete all sections as necessary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>GENERAL INFORMATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>SUMMARY DETAILS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>IMPACT SUMMARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>BUDGET INFORMATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>JUSTIFICATION OF RESOURCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT OF DATA / SAMPLES / INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>CVs and PUBLICATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the UK applicants the Case for Support must be uploaded as a PDF attachment to the Je-S application.

For Japanese applicants the Case for Support must be submitted as its PDF using e-Rad application system. Please see “補足公募要領” for further information.

3.3 Creating a Je-S account and application

To submit your proposal, please login to your Je-S account via https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk, 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 guidance provided further below).

Creating your Je-S account:

Please note that ONLY the UK Co-Principal Investigator creates the Je-S application.

New Je-S users: In order to gain access to the Je-S System, create an account.
Important information when creating a Je-S account:

- All PIs and Co-Is (this is both UK and Japanese) involved in a grant project will need to be registered on Je-S. It is important to register on Je-S at least two weeks before the deadline as the process takes time to complete.
- It is recommended that the Japanese Co-PI and Co-Investigators should ensure that their Research Organisation has been added to the Je-S database before they commence the Je-S account creation process. The Japanese Co-PI should added as the first named Co-Investigator in the application.
- The create account process will require the applicant to accept the terms and conditions using the Je-S System, before the applicant can proceed with the account creation.
- Applicants should choose to ‘Skip the ORCID identifier’ as this is NOT required for the purposes of being added to the proposal as an ‘Investigator’, priority is to create a verified Je-S account to enable the Investigator to be included within the Je-S application.
- Investigators should select the account type ‘Applicant on a Standard or Outline Proposal’ (within the Research Proposals section).

Should the Japanese Co-Investigators not be able to select their RO when attempting to create their Je-S account, MRC recommend that the Investigator contacts the Je-S Helpdesk (Email: JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org, Phone: +44 (0) 1793 44 4164, Staffed Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm, excluding bank holidays and other holidays), with the full name and address details of the Overseas Organisation and they will contact you with further instructions.

Creating your Je-S application:

- 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

- Select council: MRC
- Select document type: Standard Proposal
- Select scheme: Research Grant
- Select call/type/mode: MRC-AMED Infectious Disease Research Collaboration 2019
- Select ‘create document’ option
3.4 Financial support

AMED will provide their support to the Japan based Co-PI at their research organisation and MRC will support researchers based in the UK. MRC and AMED expect the costs on each side to accurately reflect the activities proposed in the application and that the collaborative research effort on both sides should be comparable. Reciprocated funding for exchanged staff (to cover facilities and consumables) is anticipated.

It is anticipated that the requested costs will reflect the nature of the intended activities to fit the objectives of this call:

- partnerships between UK and Japan investigators in fields of biomedical, health and clinical research
- the exchange of scientists, particularly early career scientists,
- knowledge or methodology exchange,
- complementary access to facilities / resources / equipment
- stronger opportunity for collaborative research and catalyse further synergy

The UK and Japan costs will be provided within the appropriate section of the Case for Support template however the UK costs must also be inputted on the Je-S form.
Full Economic Costing (FEC):

UK-based research costs will be funded at 80% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC). Please see section 3. Resources – Full Economic Costing in the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants for information on FEC.

Funding available:

The total funding provided by MRC for each project proposed by UK-based Co-PI over a full three (3)-year period (i.e. thirty-six (36) months) will not exceed £75,000. This is the total provision that will be made (as 80% of the requested 100% FEC costs including any indirect costs)

Costs should be requested under the appropriate headings directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect to reflect the activities in scope. These should be justified in the appropriate section of the submission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directly Incurred cost</th>
<th>Staff costs, small scientific equipment, research consumables, travelling expenses, accommodation charges, and other costs that can be justified as necessary to carry out the proposed activities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directly Allocated Costs</td>
<td>Time commitment from investigators, use of centralised resources etc Estates costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect cost</td>
<td>Indirect costs (overheads)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equipment:

Capital costs above £10,000 cannot be funded via this call and therefore any capital costs requested will not be accepted.

Costs for ‘small equipment’ under £10,000 (such as consumables) are accepted by MRC from UK applicants. These should be listed within the ‘Other Directly Incurred Costs’ section on Je-S.
4. Evaluation of proposals

Evaluation of proposals within remit will be undertaken by UK and Japanese expert panels. Recommendations from the expert panels will be considered jointly by MRC and AMED who will agree the final funding allocation.

Proposals will be assessed according to key evaluation criteria using a common evaluation form. A scoring system from 1 to 10 will be used to evaluate the proposal’s performance with respect to key evaluation criteria.

**Key Evaluation Criteria:**

1. Fit to joint call purpose
2. Importance, scientific/technological significance and clear benefit through collaborative activities
3. Quality and value for money of the implementation/appropriateness of the plan
4. Potential Impact

Other factors if they become relevant may be used as criteria - for example institutional location of awards as the funders would wish to diversify their support.

**Scoring system:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extremely Poor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Announcement of Decision**

Successful co-applicants will be notified of the final decision by AMED and MRC by December 2019.
5. Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA)

It will be the responsibility of the Co-PIs and their research organisations to draw up a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) suitable to administer and manage the delivery of the project activities, finances, intellectual property rights (IPR) and to avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project.

The Co-PIs should send the CRA signed by all partners to AMED and MRC. This agreement will be made available to the concerned funding organisations. The project partners are encouraged to sign this CRA before the official project start date, and to submit it no later than six months after the official project start date.

Co-PIs of projects selected for funding must fix a common project start date, which will be the reference date for annual and final reporting. This common project start date must be stated in the Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA).
6. Reporting

Awarded researchers and their affiliated institutions will observe the following when carrying out the collaborative research and utilizing funds provided by AMED and MRC.

Annual Progress Report

At the end of fiscal year, the co-PIs should promptly submit a joint progress report in English. In addition, successful applicants could be asked to present the project results during dedicated Review Seminars.

In Japan Co-PIs will need to send the annual report by email to kokusai5931@amed.go.jp, and to complete the annual report submission through e-Rad system. In UK Co-PIs will need to send the annual report by email to MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org.

Final Report

The Funders will request a brief final report on this collaborative activity. Joint final reports should be submitted within two (2) months after completion of the period of international collaborative research. The report should include a general summary compiled jointly by both the Japan and the UK research groups. If papers describing results of collaborative research are presented to academic journals, societies and so on, copies of such papers are to be attached to the final report.

In Japan Co-PIs will need to send the final report by email to kokusai5931@amed.go.jp, and to complete the annual report submission through e-Rad system. In UK Co-PIs will need to send the final report by email to MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org.

It will also be necessary for each funded group to submit reports to AMED and MRC in accordance with the respective regulation.

In the UK Co-PIs will require to complete the annual ResearchFish submission.
7. Contact and guidance

Please read:

- The call text
- the scheme specific UK Guidance for Applicants (this document)
- the standard MRC Guidance for Applicants

An identical version (in English) of the call-specific Case for Support template should be submitted to both MRC and AMED.

For further information -
UK applicants should contact: MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org
Japan-based applicants should contact: sicorp@amed.go.jp