Understanding the mechanistic links between nutrition and non-communicable diseases in low and middle-income countries

Guidance to applicants

How to apply

Proposals must be submitted through the Joint electronic-Submission (Je-S). For assistance submitting to Je-S please refer to the MRC Guidance for applicants.

Creating the Je-S Proposal:
The lead Principal Investigator should login to their Je-S account, select ‘Documents’ from their home page, and then select the ‘New Document’ option and following the guidance below to create the correct proposal:

Select Council: MRC
Select Document Type: Standard Proposal
Select Scheme: Research Grant
Select Call: Understanding the mechanistic links between nutrition & non-communicable diseases (within LMIC).

Attachments required:
- All mandatory sections of the Je-S proposal form
- All non-mandatory section of the Je-S proposal form that are appropriate to the Development Grant e.g. Investigators involved, Specific costs
- Case for support including justification of resources (maximum 4 sides of A4 including references following the instructions provided below)
- CV (maximum 2 page per applicant), separate CV required for each named Investigator included within the proposal
- List of Publications (maximum of 2 pages), separate List required for each Investigator included within the proposal
- Pathways to impact (maximum 1 page following the instructions provided below).
- Cover letter (optional; maximum 1 page)
- Project partner/s letter of support (optional; maximum 1 page per partner)

Other attachment types that should NOT be used (as detailed below):
- Data management plan
- Justification of Resources (the Justification of resources should be included within the Case for Support)
- MICA
- Final/interim Report
- Technical Assessment
- Letter of Support
- Head of Terms

Guidance for preparing your application can be found in the MRC Guidance for applicants, however where differing guidance is provided here, please follow this specific call guidance document.
Case for support (maximum 4 sides of A4 including references)

In your case for support please address each of the following headings using the description under each heading as guidance. The case for support may be up to four sides of A4 pages in length, including justification of resources, and references, using Verdana 10pt typeface with margins of 2cm all sides. An additional methodological and statistical design annex (maximum 1 page) is allowed, but not mandatory.

1. Title of the proposal

2. Importance of the research

Explain the research question and and its specific relevance as a health challenge affecting one or more LMIC context(s), need for research in this area, the rationale for the particular lines of research planned within the full application stage, and its potential impacts. Please refer to the call text for full details on the aims and remit of the call.

- Describe the aims and objectives of the proposed work and outline preliminary research plans and methodological approaches recognising that these will likely undergo refinement during the development phase.
- Justify the research in terms of its fit to the remit of the call, and how it is directly and primarily relevant to promoting the health and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list.
- Give sufficient details of other past and current research to show that the aims are scientifically justified, and to show that the work will add distinct value to what is already known, or in progress.
- Explain how the research might have an impact on policy and/or practice or pave the way for future research.
- Provide an estimate of the expected total resource request for the full bid.

3. Interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships

Summarise the expertise of applicants and collaborators and describe their involvement in the development of the research strategy. Describe the research environment(s) in which the work will take place.

Outline any other strategic partnerships and user engagement. Explain how these associations will contribute to achieving the objectives of the proposed research and describe how these relationships will be developed.

At the development stage, applicants may submit proposals that do not have all co-Investigators (co-Is) or collaborators in place from the outset, provided that applicants outline how they will expand partnerships. If there are any gaps in interdisciplinary collaborations/partnerships, detail the team’s ability to develop appropriate contributions from, and a good working relationship with, individuals from disciplines/countries identified as currently missing from the team.
4. Development award

4.1 Programme of development award activities:
Provide a development path for the period (up to 10 months up to £50,000.00 MRC contribution) which would lead to a strengthened application for the full stage. Give a description of the programme of activities proposed to develop the research strategies and what outputs will be delivered at each stage. Outline the resources that will be required to achieve these goals.

4.2 Timetable of development award proposed activities and justification of resources:
Give a timetabled plan of the proposed activities and expenditure and provide a justification of resources (see eligible costs, below).

4.3 Proposed development award management structure:
Describe how activities will be coordinated, including the management structure and organisation of resources.

4.4 Added value of the development grant over and above existing activities of the applicants and collaborators:
Describe how the establishment of a partnership through a development grant creates new interdisciplinary, cross-sector collaborations within the research priority areas that complement and build on the expertise and research interests of applicants and collaborators. Explain how this research strategy could not be achieved through current activities of those involved and how this approach is new and adds value over and above on-going activities.

Pathways to Impact (maximum 1 side of A4 page)

Present a coherent strategy for accelerating and maximising the impact of the proposed research in the partner(s) LMIC(s), with a particular focus on the activities that will be undertaken to address barriers that might prevent impact from arising. Demonstrate an understanding of the future development pathway for the proposed research and show consideration of the likely next steps for the outcomes of the research. Identify which users/stakeholders will benefit from the proposed research strategy developed by the partnership/network and what benefits would be delivered. Consider how any data or evidence required will be gathered, or other appropriate measures, to sufficiently tailor the research proposal to the specific needs of the LMIC.

Funding

Applicants can request up to £50,000.00 (MRC contribution) for up to 10 months. It is anticipated that around 10-12 development grants will be awarded in this call.

The deadline for submitting proposals to the development stage is 16:00 on 4 April 2019.
As a condition of funding, all successful applicants must be able to commence development award activities by 1 July 2019 with a view to submit the full proposal.
by December 2019/January 2020 and start full awards by April/May 2020. Please ensure that the proposed start date indicated within the Project Details section of the Je-S proposal, is no later than 1 July 2019 (01/07/2019).

Development awards will follow standard MRC terms and conditions.

Eligible costs for Development awards:

At the development stage, funds can be used for:
• Staff support including salary costs for evidence gathering, strategic reviews and research needs/impact assessments.
• Costs to cover activities such as workshops or meetings in order to build research strategies, plans and new relationships, developing working partnerships and management mechanisms, developing and implementing communication and dissemination strategies.
• Travel costs to support activities bringing together partners and collaborators.

Development awards cannot be used to support continuation of existing activities.

Estates and indirect costs for UK-based activities are allowed, but we strongly advise that funds under the development awards are specifically directed to the activities that will pave the way to the development of larger bids. Please provide a detailed justification of resources.

**Including overseas Co-Investigators and Research costs within the proposal.**

Costs for Overseas Co-Investigator/s and any locally employed staff and other Directly Incurred costs e.g. Travel, Consumables etc. Must be entered as exceptions (100%), cost type.

A contribution towards indirect and estates costs at the LMIC, is permitted to be included within the proposal as a separate “Other Directly Incurred Costs” item. The allowable cost should total 20% of the total LMIC staff and research costs included within the application. This cost is applicable where it can be shown that this will assist in the LMIC research capacity.

The host organisation is encouraged to liaise with any LMIC Overseas Co-Is as soon as possible to ensure that they have the required Research Proposal type Je-S account, to enable their inclusion within the Je-S form.

**Assessment process and timetable**

At the development stage, applications will be assessed by an expert panel. The panel will make funding decisions on development stage funding, invite full proposals and provide feedback on the development of the full proposals. The panel decisions are final and there will be no opportunity to respond to the feedback, other than through changes integrated within invited full proposals.

Only recipients of successful development grants are eligible to apply to the full stage funding call.