

## UK-Canada Diabetes Partnership Initiative:

### UK-Canada Diabetes Research Team Grants

The UK Medical Research Council (MRC), the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) are pleased to invite proposals to the UK-Canada Diabetes Partnership Initiative.

This initiative will provide funding for approximately six collaborative research project teams focused on tackling diabetes in the UK and Canada.

In total, up to ~£4m will be made available through this initiative: up to £2m of MRC and ESRC funding in support of the UK components; and up to \$2.7M CAD from CIHR in support of the Canadian components of the team grants.

### Background

This initiative is being run under the umbrella of the UK [Fund for International Collaboration \(FIC\)](#). The FIC aims to enhance the UK's excellence in research and innovation through global engagement. It focuses on bilateral and multilateral partnerships with global research and development leaders and is administered by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The MRC and ESRC are committed to forming strategic partnerships that will accelerate world-leading collaborative research, and enable UK scientists to engage with the best minds, ideas and resources wherever they are located. CIHR has, as part of its mission, a strategic commitment to lead, stimulate and facilitate effective Canadian international involvement in health research that benefits Canadians and the global community. As Canada's health research investment agency, CIHR collaborates with partners and researchers to support the discoveries and innovations that improve the health of Canadians and strengthen the Canadian health care system.

British and Canadian research institutions possess rich and impressive records in diabetes research. Most notably, Canadian scientists Dr. Fredrick Banting and Dr. John Macleod were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1923 for the discovery of insulin and its use in the treatment of type 1 diabetes. This is arguably one of the most significant clinical research findings of the 20th century and impacted the lives of people with diabetes almost immediately. Close to a century later, much has been learned about the pathogenesis of diabetes and new important treatments have been generated. Yet, the prevalence of diabetes is increasing and curative treatments are largely undefined.

It is estimated that some five million people in the UK have diabetes, and this comes at a significant cost to the lives of those living with the disease - diabetes is one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in the UK. Diabetes also costs the UK National Health Service (NHS) approximately £14 billion per year, equating to approximately 10% of the total NHS budget. In 2017 the estimated prevalence of diabetes among Canadians 20-79 years of age was 9.6% (The IDF Diabetes Atlas, 8<sup>th</sup> edition) an increase of ~70% in the past decade. Although diabetes-related mortality rates have decreased in Canada, the number of people affected by diabetes has continued to grow because of a surge in the number of new diabetes cases. In Canada, up to 40% of all hospital admissions for myocardial infarction, stroke, and heart failure occur in the diabetic population.<sup>1</sup> The total Canadian health care costs attributable to new cases of diabetes diagnosed between 2012 and 2022 were estimated at CAD\$15.4 billion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. [Diabetes in Canada: Facts and figures from a public health perspective](#). Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011. [Accessed 01 May 2019.]

<sup>2</sup> Bilandzic A, and Rosella L. The cost of diabetes in Canada over 10 years: applying attributable health care costs to a diabetes incidence prediction model. *Health Promot Chronic Dis Prev Can* 2017;37:49-53. <https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.37.2.03>

The global prevalence of diabetes is estimated at 8.8%, and this rate is expected to increase world-wide largely as a result of the aging population and increasing obesity rates. While these factors are contributing substantially to the dramatic increases in type 2 diabetes, there is also evidence of increasing prevalence of type 1 diabetes. Diabetes is a pandemic of major public health importance, and successfully tackling it will require global research collaboration and coordination.

## Aim

Through the UK-Canada Diabetes Research Team Grants, MRC, ESRC and CIHR aim to:

- Support world leading collaborative research teams aimed at tackling diabetes.
- Enhance existing partnerships and develop new partnerships between the UK and Canada in the area of diabetes research.
- Strengthen the strategic relationship between the UK and Canada.

## Objective

The objective is to accelerate diabetes research into mechanisms and translational solutions to improve the lives of people with diabetes in Canada and the UK through research funding for approximately six internationally competitive and innovative UK-Canada Diabetes Research Teams that will enable the pursuit of shared research interests.

## Scope

The focus of the collaborative projects will be upon 'mechanisms and translational solutions'. Projects should focus on one or more of the following key diabetes knowledge gaps:

- Genetic variability
- Molecular mechanisms, including immune-mediated beta cell injury
- Human implementation pilot studies to reverse type 2 diabetes through physical activity and nutrition. We welcome applications that include researchers with expertise in the social sciences, in addition to biomedical researchers. Social scientists can bring an understanding of, for example, individual behaviour, economic evaluation, inequalities, the wider political economy, and wider environmental influences.

This call is meant to focus on research applicable to UK and Canadian settings, not on global health.

Where applicable, researchers must provide justification that animal models proposed have the capacity to provide insights into mechanisms relevant to human diabetes and/or other information that will facilitate translation to human diabetes mellitus, consistent with the aim of this call.

## Funding

In total, up to ~£4m will be made available for this initiative. The funding agencies intend to use these available funds to support approximately six collaborative projects, subject to the quality of the applications received to the call.

Each grant will require a UK Principal Investigator (PI) and a Canadian Nominated Principal Applicant (NPA) who will equally share leadership and project management for each project. Each PI and NPA will apply for funding to support their specific component of the team grant from their respective funding agency.

**CIHR:** CIHR and partner(s) financial contributions for this initiative are subject to availability of funds. Should CIHR or partner(s) funding levels not be available or are decreased due to unforeseen circumstances, CIHR and partner(s) reserve the right to [reduce, defer or suspend](#)

[financial contributions](#) to grants received as a result of this funding opportunity.

- The total amount available from CIHR for the Canadian component of this funding opportunity is \$2,700,000, enough to fund approximately 6 grants.
- The maximum amount per grant is \$150,000 per year for up to 3 years for a total of \$450,000 per grant.

Funds are available for one Canadian component per grant.

Canadian applicants should review the [Use of Grant Funds](#) section of the Tri-Agency (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) Financial Administration Guide for a complete listing and description of allowable costs and activities.

**UK:** The MRC and ESRC will make up to £2m available. UK based applicants may therefore request up to a maximum of £333,333 to cover the UK component of each research team grant. The MRC and ESRC will provide funding for the UK-based applicants under standard arrangements and at 80% Full Economic Cost (FEC). **The UK element of funding will not cover UK PhD studentships or requests for capital items.**

The agencies also expect the costs on each side to accurately reflect the research effort to be carried out. It is expected that the research effort on both sides should be comparable.

For further information, please read the [call-specific Guidance for Applicants](#).

## Duration

Projects must be three years in duration and must start on 1 April 2020.

UK applicants should refer to the standard [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#) for information on what the starting procedure entails. Please inform the relevant support staff in your organisation of this requirement to ensure the project starts on time.

## Spending obligations

Due to the tight time scales of this call, successful UK research organisations will need to adhere to strict spending requirements. For this call, the end date of the proposed research should be no later than 31 March 2023. The UK payment profiles are likely to be slightly irregular for this scheme.

Although project work is anticipated to be completed by March 31, 2023, CIHR provides authorisation to use funds for an additional year after the expiry date of the grant so this provides investigators until March 31, 2024 to spend any remaining funds of the CIHR portion.

Researchers should be aware that there will be reporting requirements for both Canada and the UK relating to successful grants. All UK and Canadian researchers participating in successful projects must be willing to feed into both the Canadian and UK reporting processes.

- CIHR: The Nominated Principal Applicant will be required to submit an [electronic Final Report](#) to CIHR. This online report will be made available to the Nominated Principal Applicant on ResearchNet at the beginning of the grant funding period and can be filled in as the research progresses.
- MRC/ESRC: The UK Principal Investigators will be required to complete an annual return on the [Research Fish](#) system during the period of the award and for at least five years after the award has terminated. The information provided should be on behalf of both the UK and Canadian component of the project.

## Eligibility

This call will fund collaborations between UK and Canadian research teams, fostering and enhancing relationships between researchers working in the area of diabetes.

For support under this call, applicants must be eligible to apply for funding from their respective country's funding agency/agencies:

### MRC and ESRC

- For the UK participants, standard UKRI eligibility criteria as described on the [UKRI website](#) will apply. Research Organisations that are eligible to apply to the MRC, for example MRC Units and Institutes may apply to this call. Further information on eligibility is available in section 1 of the [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#).

### CIHR

- For an application to be eligible:
  - The Nominated Principal Applicant must be an [independent researcher](#)
  - The Nominated Principal Applicant must be appointed at an eligible institution (See CIHR's [Institutional Eligibility Requirements](#) for eligibility process and associated timelines)
- For additional eligibility requirements for individuals, refer to CIHR's [Individual Eligibility Requirements](#).

Principal Investigators/Applicants may only submit one application to this scheme as Principal Investigator but may be involved in more applications if listed as a Co-Investigator.

Principal Investigators/Applicants will apply for funding to support their specific component from their respective funding agency. Applications submitted to only one side/funding agency will not be accepted.

The funders are not seeking to fund applicants/partners outside of the UK and Canada through this initiative. Please contact [international@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:international@mrc.ukri.org) if you are considering involving a partner from a third country in your proposal.

## How to apply

- **Intention to Submit**

UK based researchers planning to submit to this scheme must submit a compulsory short [Intention to Submit \(ItS\)](#) by 23:00 British Summer Time (BST) on 28 August 2019. Canadian based researchers planning to participate ([English version](#) / [French version](#)) in a collaborative research team for this scheme must 'register' their intention to submit via [ResearchNet](#) by 20:00 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on the same date, August 28, 2019.

The PI and NPA cannot change between ItS and full application but additional participants can be added/removed at full application.

Failure to submit a valid ItS/registration to both funders by the deadline will invalidate both submissions.

MRC, ESRC and CIHR will undertake eligibility checks of the PIs and NPAs and their respective organisations, but not the remit or relevance at this point; any ineligible applications will be withdrawn from the competition. Applicants should not await a response from the funders following the ItS

submission or registration, but simply continue with the development of the full proposal to be submitted by the deadline of 16:00 British Summer Time on 25 September 2019. The MRC, ESRC and CIHR will use the ItS to help prepare for the review process.

- **Full Applications**

The UK and Canadian applicants will develop a common research plan and jointly prepare the full proposal. UK and Canadian applicants must apply separately to their respective funding agencies for the funding component requested within each country, but the application must be based around a common research plan and vision. Applicants must therefore prepare a joint Case for Support (including, if applicable, a one-page methodology annex) and a separate optional one-page Gantt chart.

This full proposal must be submitted to the MRC via the UKRI [Joint electronic submission \(Je-S\) system](#). The Je-S submissions must be received by 16:00 British Summer Time on the day of the deadline, September 25, 2019. Applicants must complete all sections required for a standard MRC grant proposal including a jointly prepared Case for Support and Justification of Resources. Further guidance can be found in the general [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#) and the [call-specific Guidance for Applicants](#).

**CIHR:** Canadian applicants must also submit an abbreviated application to CIHR via [ResearchNet by 20:00 \(EDT\)](#) on the same date, September 25, 2019. The purpose of this additional application to CIHR is to provide CIHR with an Operating Budget for the project (with the amounts quoted in Canadian dollars) a complete justification for funds requested, and to provide a one-page research summary of the project.

Failure to submit a valid application to the MRC and an abbreviated application to CIHR by the deadline will invalidate both submissions. The MRC, ESRC and CIHR will conduct a remit check/relevance review to identify applications that are in alignment with the scope of the call. Applications that are deemed not to be eligible or not to be relevant to the call will be withdrawn from the competition.

UK and Canadian researchers should discuss ethics and intellectual property before fully developing their proposal. For more details, see Collaboration agreement, ethics and intellectual property section of this call document and the [call-specific Guidance for Applicants](#).

#### **Additional Guidance for “Case for Support”**

A jointly-prepared Case for Support should be submitted by the applicants to the MRC. This must be attached as a PDF to the Je-S application.

Briefly, the case for support may be up to 10 A4 pages in length (including illustrations and references) plus an optional additional 1 page methodology annex, using Arial 11pt typeface with margins of 2cms on all sides. In your case for support you should address each of the following headings

- Title
- Importance of the research
- Scientific potential
  - People and track record
  - Research environment
  - Research plans and deliverables
- Ethics and research governance
- Exploitation and dissemination

Generic Guidance on content under each of these headings can be found in [section 2.2.3.3 of MRC's standard Guidance for Applicants](#) document and call-specific guidance can be found in the [call-specific Guidance for Applicants](#).

Applicants must integrate sex as a biological variable and gender as a social determinant of health, as appropriate, into their research to promote rigorous science and to allow for the discovery of sex and gender differences and their underlying mechanisms where appropriate. As such, applicants are required to indicate how they will account for sex (biological factor) and gender (socio-cultural factor) in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of findings. For more information and resources, please see the [Sex, Gender and Health Research](#) page on the CIHR website.

### Assessment criteria and decision-making process

To be funded, proposals must be internationally competitive and at a standard equivalent to that normally expected to be supported by each funding organisation.

Key assessment criteria for the submissions will be:

- Research Quality
- Research environment and people
- Impact
- Ethics
- Data management plan
- Resources requested

Eligible applications will be externally peer reviewed. Applicants will be offered the opportunity to provide a written response to these reviews. Following this process, applications will be assessed by a joint MRC-ESRC-CIHR Peer Review Panel. Applications will be given one overall score. The proposals with the highest scores will be funded in rank order above the funding cut off.

It is envisaged that all deemed relevant applications will go through the full peer review process described above. However, the MRC/ESRC/CIHR reserve the right to adjust the process and introduce a shortlisting/streamlining step if a high number of proposals are submitted to the call.

Funding decisions will be made through a joint process.

### Key dates

<b>Pre-announcement</b>	<b>17 May 2019</b>
<b>Launch Date</b>	<b>18 June 2019</b>
<b>Deadline for compulsory Intention to Submit (in both countries)</b>	<b>28 August 2019</b>
<b>Deadline for investigators to submit proposal (in both countries)</b>	<b>25 September 2019</b>
<b>External/Remote Peer Review</b>	<b>October – early December 2019</b>
<b>PI response to peer reviews</b>	<b>Mid December 2019</b>
<b>Notice of Decision Date</b>	<b>Approximately early March 2020</b>
<b>Funding Start Date</b>	<b>1 April 2020</b>



## Collaboration agreement, ethics and intellectual property

As the research projects will be carried out by multiple research organisations and project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations and project partners, including ownership of intellectual property (IP) generated during the project and rights to exploitation, and costs of IP management (this is not an eligible cost to MRC), as well as ethics considerations is expected to be set out in a formal collaboration agreement between the research organisations involved. It is the responsibility of the research organisations to put such an agreement in place before the research begins. **The terms of collaboration and any agreement shall not conflict any terms and conditions, policies or other requirements of the MRC, ESRC and CIHR.** When collaborating, researchers must conform to their respective, applicable requirements on research involving humans, animals or stem cells.

Further details are provided in the [call-specific Guidance for Applicants](#) for this call.

## Contacts and Guidance

Please read:

- the current document (the [call text](#))
- the [call-specific Guidance for Applicants](#)
- the [standard MRC Guidance for Applicants](#)
- any relevant CIHR guidance.

An identical version of the [call-specific Justification of Resources template](#) should be submitted to both the MRC and CIHR.

For further information, MRC and ESRC UK applicants should contact: [international@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:international@mrc.ukri.org)

For further information, relating to the call or the CIHR application Canadian applicants should contact:

CIHR Contact Centre

Telephone: 613-954-1968

Toll Free: 1-888-603-4178

Email: [support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)

For service hours, please consult CIHR's [Contact us](#) page.