Medical Research Council

Supplementary guidance for outline submissions to the Applied Global Health Research Board

This document describes the additional requirements for outline applications to MRC's Applied Global Health Research Board. Applications to the Board should follow standard MRC policies and processes as set out in our funding pages, applicant guidance, and peer review pages. These pages should be consulted prior to reading this document which sets out instances where different rules apply.

This document covers:

- additional guidance for outline applicants
- the application process
- the assessment criteria for applications to the Board

Contents

Version	Date	Comments/Changes
1.0	8/01/20	Original Document
1.1	02/03/20	Page 6: Additional information provided regarding eligibility of studentships in section 1.6 in the supplementary guidance. Page 9: Removal of requirement for 'Impact Summary' section of the proposal form in section 2.1. Pages 10-12: Additional headings provided in the case for support for where a population cohort is proposed. Page 13: Additional information on the use of animals overseas and the requirement for a UK collaborator where animal research is proposed, Section 4 added. Information regarding the requirements for population cohorts has been updated in Section 6. Page 20-21: Reference to studentships removed from the partnership grant section of the assessment criteria.
1.2	01/06/20	Page 4: Inclusion of updated policy towards funding researchers in China and India. Page 5 and 9: Project Partner letter of support requirement clarified. Page 6: Additional guidance added regarding registration on the Je-S system. Page 11: Clarification regarding the treatment of applications with missing or additional attachments, and applications with attachments that exceed the page limits. Page 13: Inclusion of additional information about HIC costs.
1.3	21/09/20	Page 4: Update to eligibility requirements for Co-Investigators Page 8-13: Additional guidance added regarding optional letters of support Page 9-10: Classifications - Grant Type selection added to Je-S Outline form. Applicants are required to select one of the three 'Grant Type' options available and 'Save' this information. Page 16-24: Assessment criteria updated to clarify requirements of the three grant types at the outline stage.

This guidance should be consulted after the applicant has consulted the standard MRC guidance for applicants. The numbers listed next to the section headings below link to the relevant section in the standard guidance for ease of comparison.

1. Who can apply and how to apply

1.1 Types of research organisations (ROs)

In addition to the eligible research organisations outlined in the MRC guidance for applicants, the Board will accept applications from the following lead organisations. All organisations must have sufficient capacity to deliver research projects, including robust financial management processes:

- **Higher education institutions based in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)**
  A university or institution based in an LMIC with degree awarding powers recognised by the government in which the organisation is based.
- **Research institutes based in LMICs**
  A research focused institution based in an LMIC funded by the government of the country in which the organisation is based or by a not-for-profit organisation.
- **Research focused non-profit organisations based in LMICs**
  A not-for-profit organisation based in an LMIC with dedicated research capacity.

Applied global health research requires the involvement of a diverse range of collaborating organisations in order to effect sustainable change. As such the Board will accept applications involving the following collaborating organisations (please note that these organisations are not eligible to lead a proposal but can be named as Co-Investigators):

- **Non-profit organisations**
  A not-for-profit organisation based in an LMIC. This can include grass roots organisations, and community groups.

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.

Any collaboration with industry or other for-profit organisations is governed by the MRC Industry Collaboration Agreement (MICA). More information can be found on the MRC's MICA pages.

All decisions regarding organisational eligibility lie with the MRC office. Applications will be returned to the research organisation if the MRC office deem that the organisational eligibility requirements have not been met.

If you have previously received funding from the MRC but do not currently meet the organisational eligibility requirements, or you are unsure of the eligibility of your organisation please contact the MRC Board team at: international@mrc.ukri.org.

1.3 Applicants

1.3.1 The Principal Investigator

The Board is open to applications from Principal Investigators (PIs) based in LMICs except China and India. There is no requirement for a project to involve UK based investigators. The Board is also open to UK based PIs working in equitable partnership with LMIC colleagues.

1.3.2 Co-Investigators

Applied global health research requires the involvement of a diverse range of collaborators, as such the eligibility requirements for Co-Investigators (Co-Is) are broader than those set out for the PI. As well as being based at a higher education institute, research institute, or research focused non-profit organisation, a Co-I can also be based at a not-for-profit organisation which does not have specific research capacity.

Where there is engagement from individuals based in government agencies, international intergovernmental organisations (e.g., WHO), or other stakeholder organisations (e.g. industry collaborators) applicants should include them as a named project partner. Please refer to the guidance on project partners below.

In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to include staff members of government ministries as named co-investigators rather than project partners, where a proportion of their time is spent working on the project. Inclusion of named government officials as co-investigators must be discussed and agreed with the relevant programme manager in advance of application, please contact: international@mrc.ukri.org.

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, information on how to register can be found in the MRC guidance for applicants.

1.3.4 Project partners

In addition to the information provided in the MRC guidance for applicants, we encourage applications to the Board involving contributions from 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. Each project partner must provide a letter of support, please see the MRC guidance for applicants for more information.

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.

1.6 What can be applied for by whom

1.6.1 Studentships

The Board cannot award grants directly to individual students. Studentships cannot be included on research grants, programme grants or partnership grants. Please refer to information on Studentships for further details on what support is available.

1.7 How to apply

As stated in the MRC guidance for applicants it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they apply to the correct funding call/board/type of grant and that their application is submitted with adequate time to allow their research organisation, to complete necessary checks and complete the final submission (through Je-S), to the **MRC by 16:00 (GMT/BST)**, on the advertised MRC submission deadline.

All investigators and their institutions are required to be registered on the Je-S system, before proposals can be submitted. Whether the proposal is UK led or Overseas led, it is expected that the PI will liaise with all Co-Investigators (to be included in the proposal), to ensure each Investigator creates the required Je-S account well in advance of the call closing date e.g. A minimum of two weeks before the call closes.

Overseas Investigators should follow the following guidance:

1. Self-Register your Overseas Organisation by selecting this link, or navigate to the Je-S login page and select the option Self-registration for organisations, to add your organisation to the Je-S database.
2. Following the creation of the Overseas Organisation, the overseas Investigator should be directed to create a 'Research Proposal' type Je-S Account, by either selecting the following link, or by navigating to the Je-S Login page and selecting the Create an Account option.

UK Based Investigators (that do not already have a Je-S account), should navigate to the Je-S Login page and select the 'Create an Account' option.

Application deadlines will usually be in April and October for meetings in July and January. Outline applications are considered by the Board and external experts. Invited full applications are subject to international peer review before consideration by the Board.

Because the Board requires the submission of outline applications, it is not mandatory for programme or partnership grant applicants to contact the MRC Programme Manager prior to submission but they can do so if they wish via international@mrc.ukri.org.

1.7.2 Applying for a funding opportunity

Applicants should read the appropriate guidance set out in the MRC guidance for applicants regarding starting an application on the Je-S system.
Applicants to the Board should make the following selections on Je-S:

- Select Council: **MRC**
- Select Document Type: **Outline Proposal**
- Select Scheme: **Standard Outline**
- Select Call/Type/Mode: **Applied Global Health Research Board Outline [round] [year]**
- Select: **'Create Document'** option

1.7.3 Who can submit

The MRC guidance for applicants gives details on who should submit the research proposal to Je-S. The submission route for an application is not always clear to organisations who do not routinely use the Je-S system. Some organisations have set up a "Submitter Pool" who will need to approve and submit the application before the deadline.

It is important that you clarify the Je-S submission arrangements for your organisation well in advance of the submission date.

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 the "Document Actions" button and then select "Show Submission Path" button.

If the screen shows "With Owner" and "With Council", then the proposal will be submitted directly by you (the PI) to MRC (the Council).

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 research organisation's named submitters. You should allow at least 48 hours for them to do this, your research organisation may require longer, and we would strongly advise 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 it. Please note that they will need to do this no later than 16.00 GMT/BST UK time on the advertised submission deadline.

2. The Application

The Applied Global Health Research Board will have a two-stage application process. Applicants are required to initially submit an outline proposal for consideration by the Board. The Board will then invite the highest quality proposals to submit a full application.

The outline application is shorter than a standard MRC application and a lot of the attachments detailed in MRC's guidance for applicants are not needed at this stage.

The Applied Global Health Research Board requires the following at the outline stage:

- The proposal form
- The case for support (5 pages + 1 page for references)
- CVs (2 pages) and Publications (1 page)

The following attachments are optional at the outline stage:

- Letters of support (2 pages per letter)

Please **do not** submit a Justification of Resources at the outline stage.

2.1 The proposal form

At the outline stage minimal information is requested through the Je-S form. Information will be requested under the following headings:

Organisation where the grant would be held
This should be the lead RO responsible for administering the grant.

Project title
This should be no more than 150 characters and reflect the aim of the project.

Please note that if an application falls under the MRC Industry Collaboration Agreement then the project title should start with "MICA:".

Start date and duration
The anticipated start date should be realistic and would normally be between one month and six months after the date of the decision-making Board meeting.

The duration of a grant will typically be from 12 to 60 months. Research grant applications for two years or less are not restricted to proof of principle or pilot work and will be accepted provided they are within the Board's remit.

Once a grant has been issued, grant holders are required to make every effort to start on the agreed date. The start of the grant may be delayed by up to 3 months from the start date shown in the offer letter, with the duration of the grant remaining unchanged. The grant may lapse if it is not started within this period.

Applicants
This should include the PI and all Co-Is involved in the project.

Please note that the PI and all Co-Is **must** be registered on the Je-S system before they can be added to an application, information on how to register can be found in the MRC guidance for applicants.

Objectives
What is the project aiming to achieve? The objectives of the proposed project should be listed in order of priority and should be those that the investigators would wish the MRC to use as the basis for evaluation of work upon completion of any grant awarded.

Impact Summary
UK Research and Innovation has announced changes to requirements on 'Pathways to Impact'. As a result of this change you will no longer be required to provide an 'Impact Summary' within your grant application. Impact should be at the core of the proposed research and it is expected that information about the planned impact be communicated throughout the proposal.

Summary
A plain English (layman's) summary of the proposed work, explaining:

- The context of the aims and objectives of the research
- The potential applications and benefits

Summary of resources required for the project
Staffing, equipment and other resources required to carry out the project. Only high-level figures are required at the outline stage. Applicants are encouraged to request resources commensurate with the objectives of their research; both small and large scale grants will be accepted. Please see the guidance provided below.

Project Partners
This should include all Project Partners involved in the project, i.e. collaborators not requesting funding or that are providing their own contribution. PI and Co-I research organisations should not be added as Project Partners.
Please note that it is not required for Project Partners to be registered on the Je-S system. Each project partner must provide a letter of support, please see the MRC guidance for applicants for more information.

Classifications - Grant Type
Applicants that are unsure which grant type to select, are advised to select the option 'Research Grant' and save this information to ensure this section of the Je-S form validates correctly. It should be noted that the selection is the judgement of the applicant and there is no right or wrong answer. A description of the three different grant type options is provided below with links to further information if required. To reiterate, if applicants are still unsure which option to select, please select the 'Research Grant' option, there is no need to raise this with MRC for further advice.

1. Partnership Grant

Partnership grants provide funding to establish new networks in neglected areas, set up a new research platform, or conduct training and capacity building. Stand-alone, hypothesis-driven research projects should not be included in partnership grant applications, although small proof-of-principle studies can be (e.g., to test the performance of the new platform).

More information can be found on the funding pages on MRC's website.

2. Programme Grant

A programme grant comprises a set of related projects that when taken together address a much larger research question. Programme grants provide larger, longer term (typically five years) and renewable funding. More information can be found on the funding pages on MRC's website.

3. Research Grant

The research grant is designed to be flexible enough to support a very wide range of research needs. More information can be found on the funding pages on MRC's website, although please note the exceptions to the standard guidance throughout this document (e.g., awards for less than two years are not only for proof of principle work).

2.2 Attachments

The following attachments are required at the outline stage:

Mandatory Attachments	Page Limit
Case for Support	Maximum 5 sides of A4 (plus 1 side for references)
CVs	Maximum 2 sides of A4 per person
Publications	Maximum 1 side of A4 per person
Letters of support (optional)	Maximum 2 sides of A4 per letter

2.2.3 Case for Support

The MRC guidance for applicants gives detailed information on the requirements for the case for support document.

An outline case for support is required at the outline stage, it should not exceed five sides of A4 plus one additional page of references (six pages in total). Additional annexes are not permitted, this includes the reproducibility and statistical design annex. Any applications missing or exceeding the case for support page limit will be rejected. Any additional attachments will be removed from the view of the referees.

Please use the following headings when preparing your outline Case for Support:

I. Research Project Summary

- Full title of the project (no more than 150 characters)
- Type of research award (Research Grant/Programme Grant/Partnership Grant)
- In which country(ies) will the project take place?
- Duration in months
- Total amount requested from this funding scheme
- Goals & principal research question to be addressed; please identify a concise and clearly articulated ultimate aim of the project.

- What Board opportunity (if any) the proposal addresses (list all that apply)

II. Importance

- Please consider issues such as burden of disease and priority for the relevant local, regional and national health services.
- What evidence is there that the answer to your research question is needed and wanted by relevant users and/or policy-makers?
- If a population cohort is proposed:
    - Explain why these scientific questions could not be answered using existing cohorts and data sources.
    - If a new data sweep is planned of an existing cohort, justify why the proposed timing is important in scientific terms.
    - If an extension to an existing cohort is proposed, justify how continued support will add value and enable new research

III. Project description

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

- Which stakeholders will be consulted and when?
- In which setting(s) will the research take place? Where a particular setting is proposed which excludes the most vulnerable, for example the school setting, considerations should be made to include vulnerable groups or justify the choice not to.
- Who will the research participants be and why?
- What questions will be addressed?
- 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.
- What pilot or preliminary data do you have available to help the panel assess the feasibility of the proposed study?
- If you are testing delivery of an intervention, please be clear about what that intervention will consist of and why.
- 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 a population cohort is proposed:
    - Who are the study population, including sample size, age range, gender, ethnicity, and geographical location?
    - Is the funding to support ongoing running of the cohort (including routine data collection/sweeps) or is it to conduct a specific scientific study?

- Include details of any plans to collaborate with existing cohorts
- If an existing cohort is being used, show follow-up rates and attrition clearly from initiation to the most recent data collection.

IV. How will the results of 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?
- What is the envisaged social impact of the project?
- If a population cohort is proposed:
    - For new cohorts, provide details of the unique scientific niche that the study will occupy.
    - For existing cohorts, provide the three to five most important outputs over the previous funding period; these could include scientific, policy, or capacity-building outputs.

V. Research Project Team

- Details of people involved
- How does the team of investigators incorporate the necessary range of disciplinary expertise and experience to carry out the study?
- If the proposal is a MICA, describe the input/involvement of the industry partner
- If a population cohort is proposed:
    - Indicate how the cohort can be “discovered” by other scientists and criteria/processes for access and sharing of data/samples.

VI. Capacity Building

- Details of capacity building needs and opportunities
- What are the capacity building plans within the research project?
- Who will participate in delivering these activities and who will benefit from them?

VII. Ethical Implications

- What are the ethical implications of the research?
- How will these be managed?

VIII. Financial Information

- Are other funding partners involved? Who are the partners and what is the status of the discussions?
- In addition to the costing 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)

IX. Proposal History

Has an application for funding for this project been submitted previously to FCDO (previously DFID), MRC, NIHR, another UKRI council or another funding organisation? If so, please indicate the status of the previous application.

2.2.7 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 and NGOs). Each letter of support should be no longer than 2 pages A4.

Letters of support **are not** required from the PI and Co-I host research organisations.

Please see Section 2.2.6 of the MRC Guidance for Applicants for full details on the requirements for Letters of Support for Project Partners.

3. Resources

3.1 Full economic cost

All grants should be costed on the basis of the full economic costs (FEC) necessary to deliver the research. For funds requested by research organisations based overseas the MRC will fund 100% of the FEC. For funds requested by research organisations based in the UK the MRC will typically fund 80% of the FEC and the RO(s) must agree to find the balance of FEC from other resources.

All submissions to the Board will have overseas costs and it is essential that these are entered correctly as Exceptions and claimed at 100%.

3.2 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 on the basis of estimates. Do not represent directly auditable costs on a project-by-project basis.

Indirect Costs
UK RO overhead costs

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

3.3 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.

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 only support the direct costs of researchers based in high incomes countries outside of the UK, as well as researchers based in China or India. These costs should not exceed 30% of the proposal total.

3.7 Open access

Projects led by an organisation based in an LMIC can request open access costs as part of their application.

UK led proposals cannot claim open access costs and should follow the guidance set out in the MRC guidance for applicants.

4. Proposals involving animal use

4.4.6 Use of animals overseas

MRC has published specific guidance on the requirements when using animals overseas.

The Board cannot fund research involving animals overseas where there is no UK collaborator involved in the project.

5. Ethics and approvals

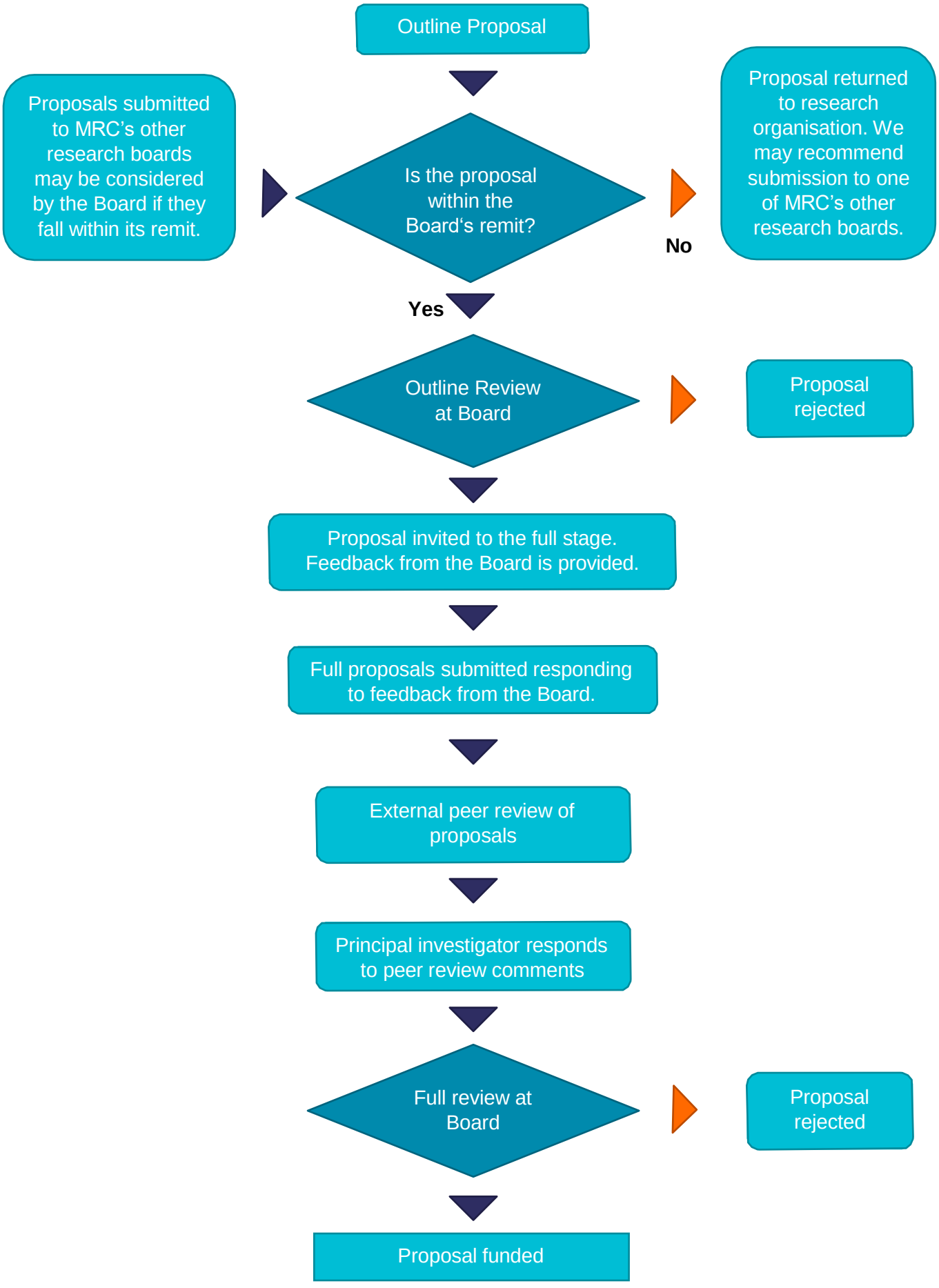
Full guidance on ethics and approvals can be found in the MRC guidance for applicants. We ask all applicants to take into consideration the guidance set out in section 5.2.2 Research involving human participants in lower- and middle-income countries.

6. Research Involving Existing Facilities and Resources

Applicants submitting a population (i.e. non-clinical) cohort proposal should ensure the necessary information is captured in the case for support. These applications will undergo preliminary review by MRC's Cohort Strategic Review Group to inform the Board's decision.

Application Process

The Applied Global Health Research Board will have a two-stage application process. All applications to the Board will start with the submission of an outline proposal which will be assessed by the Board. The Board will then select the highest quality proposals to be invited to submit full proposals.



Assessment Criteria

The following assessment criteria will be used to assess all proposals submitted to the Applied Global Health Research Board. The assessment of any research proposal is based on three core criteria:

1. **Importance:** how important are the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that are being addressed?

2. **Scientific potential:** what are the prospects for good scientific progress?

3. **Resources requested:** are the funds requested essential for the work, and do the importance and scientific potential justify funding on the scale requested? Does the proposal represent good value for money?

The following outlines the detailed assessment criteria that will be used depending on the type of grant that has been applied for.

Research Grant assessment criteria

Importance	• How important are the research questions, or gaps in knowledge, that would be addressed? • Are the research questions driven by LMIC country needs? • Is the level of innovation likely to lead to significant new understanding?
Scientific potential	**Research Quality** • What are the prospects for good scientific progress? • How convincing and coherent is the management strategy proposed? • Are the methodological approaches the most relevant to answer the research questions? Robust methodology and research design should be at the centre of any proposal to aid reproducibility of research findings. • How well have project risks been identified, and will they be mitigated? • Have appropriate capacity building activities been embedded within the research proposal? **Research environment and people** • How suitable is the investigator group? Please comment on track record(s) of the individual(s) in their fields and whether they are best-placed to deliver the proposed research. • Does the research team have the necessary disciplinary expertise to undertake the study? • Have LMIC researchers had intellectual input into the setting of the research agenda and its ongoing strategic direction? Are the partnerships equitable? • How suitable is the environment where the proposed research will take place? Has attention been paid to gender equality within the research team? Please comment on the level of commitment of the host research organisation to supporting the proposed research and whether appropriate facilities will be available to the researchers. • Have relevant stakeholders been identified and engaged from outside of the academic community? If they have not yet been engaged are there clear plans to do so? • Where a new research network is proposed, is the membership (geographical and disciplinary) and management structure of the network appropriate? Will it add value to existing networks? **Impact** • What is the potential economic and societal impact of the proposed research in LMICs? Please comment on: • identification of realistic potential improvements to human or population health • contribution to relieving disease/disability burden and/or improving quality of life • identification of potential impacts of research and plans to deliver these • Is there sufficient engagement with relevant stakeholders within the country/countries of focus to enable appropriate dissemination of the research findings?

	• Where appropriate, has consideration been given to how scale up of the research findings into policy and practice would occur? What is the likelihood of uptake of the research findings e.g. has a cost effectiveness evaluation, where relevant, been included as part of the proposed research? • Has consideration been given to the impact of the research on gender equality? • Are the findings likely to be generalizable to other relevant settings? **Ethics** • Are there any ethical and/or research governance issues? Please comment on: • whether the proposed research is ethically acceptable • any ethical issues that need separate consideration • appropriateness of ethical review and research governance considerations • any potential adverse consequences for humans, animals or the environment and whether these risks have been addressed satisfactorily in the proposal **Data management plan –** *please note that a detailed data management plan document is only required if invited to submit a full application.* • Does the data management plan indicate whether the applicants have (or are likely to have) a sound plan for managing the research data funded through the award, taking account: the types, scale and complexity of data being (or to be) managed • the likely long-term value for further research including by sharing data • the anticipated information security and ethics requirements **MRC Industrial Collaboration Awards (MICA)** Any research proposal involving a collaboration with one or more industrial partners (contributing either in cash or in kind) is handled by MRC as a MICA. All MICA proposals will be identifiable to reviewers as they will have the word 'MICA' at the start of the project title. • If the proposal has been identified as a MICA, it will also need to convince the relevant research board or funding panel that: • the planned research could or would not be undertaken in the absence of the requested funding, or that it could not be undertaken to the quality level or timescale proposed • the collaboration or partnership is consistent with the aims and delivery of the project and MRC funding rules and requirements for academic-industry collaborations • potential conflicts of interest between the parties are acceptable and are being, or would be, appropriately managed **Research involving cohort resources** For any research proposal involving a cohort: • What new health research questions or hypotheses will it be possible to answer over the next five to ten years using the cohort resource? • Why can this science be addressed using this cohort above other resources? • What does this cohort offer that other cohorts do not (nationally and internationally) and how does it relate to other relevant cohorts? Applicants should either list the assets (measures, specimens, population group) as an Annex or reference the cohort website. • What are the plans for establishing the cohort as a resource – how is it/will it be used by the wider research community?
Resources requested	*Please note that at the outline stage only limited information is required on the resources requested. Please see guidance provided above.* • Are the funds requested essential for the work and justified by the importance and scientific potential of the research? • Is the applicants' stated time commitment to the work appropriate and sufficient? • Does the proposal demonstrate value for money in terms of the resources requested? • Is the distribution of funding across partners appropriate for the intended contribution within the research proposal? • Are requests for equipment (>£10,000) fully justified? **Research involving cohort resources** • Applicants must be clear which costs relate to de novo data collection, analysis of new data and/or maintenance or use of existing data

Programme Grant assessment criteria

Additional criteria specific to a programme grant are italicised.

Importance	• How important are the research questions, or gaps in knowledge, that would be addressed? • *Is the proposed work a "programme", i.e. a coordinated and coherent group of related projects to answer an inter-related set of questions?* • *Does the work require long-term and extensive support?* • Are the research questions driven by LMIC country needs?

Scientific potential	**Research Quality**
	• What are the prospects for good scientific progress?
	• How convincing and coherent is the management strategy proposed?
	• Are the methodological approaches the most relevant to answer the research questions? Robust methodology and experimental research design should be at the centre of any proposal to aid reproducibility of research findings.
	• How well have project risks been identified, and will they be mitigated?
	• Have appropriate capacity building activities been embedded within the research proposal?
	
	Research Environment and People
	• *From the applicant's track record of research, do they have the potential to successfully manage and deliver a major research programme?*
	• What is the track record and standing in the field of the named applicants? Reviewers should take account of preprints in considering applications, noting the content of the papers, not where they, or subsequent peer reviewed papers, are published.
	• How appropriate is the expertise of the applicants to the proposed work? Does the research team have the necessary disciplinary expertise to undertake the study?
	• Have LMIC researchers had intellectual input into the setting of the research agenda and its ongoing strategic direction? Are the partnerships equitable?
	• Has attention been paid to gender equality within the research team?
	• Is the proposed environment(s) suitable and does it have the variety of expertise and disciplines to support a programme?
	• *Has the host institution(s) demonstrated a clear commitment to the proposed programme for the duration of the grant?*
	• Are any collaborators well chosen?
	• *Does the environment provide appropriate opportunities for training and career development of personnel supported on the grant?*
	• *Are there any dependencies on other organisations or funding of which the MRC should be made aware?*
	
	• Have relevant stakeholders been identified and engaged from outside of the academic community? If they have not yet been engaged are there clear plans to do so?
	• Where a new research network is proposed, is the membership (geographical and disciplinary) and management structure of the network appropriate? Will it add value to existing networks?
	
	Impact
	• What is the potential economic and societal impact of the proposed research in LMICs? Please comment on:
	  ○ identification of realistic potential improvements to human or population health
	  ○ contribution to relieving disease/disability burden and/or improving quality of life
	  ○ identification of potential impacts of research and plans to deliver these

	○ Is there sufficient engagement with relevant stakeholders within the country/countries of focus to enable appropriate dissemination of the research findings? ○ Where appropriate, has consideration been given to how scale up of the research findings into policy and practice would occur? What is the likelihood of uptake of the research findings e.g. has a cost effectiveness evaluation, where relevant, been included as part of the proposed research? ○ Has consideration been given to the impact of the research on gender equality? ○ Are the findings likely to be generalizable to other relevant settings? **Ethics** • Are there any ethical and/or research governance issues? Please comment on: ○ whether the proposed research is ethically acceptable ○ any ethical issues that need separate consideration ○ appropriateness of ethical review and research governance considerations ○ any potential adverse consequences for humans, animals or the environment and whether these risks have been addressed satisfactorily in the proposal **Data Management Plan** – *please note that a detailed data management plan document is only required if invited to submit a full application.* • Does the data management plan indicate whether the applicants have (or are likely to have) a sound plan for managing the research data funded through the award, taking account: ○ the types, scale and complexity of data being (or to be) managed ○ the likely long-term value for further research including by sharing data ○ the anticipated information security and ethics requirements. **MRC Industrial Collaboration Awards (MICA)** Any research proposal involving a collaboration with one or more industrial partners (contributing either in cash or in kind) is handled by MRC as a MICA. All MICA proposals will be identifiable to reviewers as they will have the word 'MICA' at the start of the project title. • If the proposal has been identified as a MICA, it will also need to convince the relevant research board or funding panel that: ○ the planned research could or would not be undertaken in the absence of the requested funding, or that it could not be undertaken to the quality level or timescale proposed ○ the collaboration or partnership is consistent with the aims and delivery of the project and MRC funding rules and requirements for academic-industry collaborations ○ potential conflicts of interest between the parties are acceptable and are being, or would be, appropriately managed **Research involving cohort resources** • For any research proposal involving a cohort. • What new health research questions or hypotheses will it be possible to answer over the next five to ten years using the cohort resource? • Why can this science be addressed using this cohort above other resources? • What does this cohort offer that other cohorts do not (nationally and internationally) and how does it relate to other relevant cohorts? Applicants should either list the assets (measures, specimens, population group) as an Annex or reference the cohort website. • What are the plans for establishing the cohort as a resource – how is it/will it be used by the wider research community?
Resources requested	*Please note that at the outline stage only limited information is required on the resources requested. Please see guidance provided above.* • Are the funds requested essential for the work and justified by the importance and scientific potential of the research? • Is the applicants' stated time commitment to the work appropriate and sufficient?

	• Where the MRC is being asked to fund investigator salaries, are the requests in each case reasonable? • Does the proposal demonstrate value for money in terms of the resources requested? • Is the distribution of funding across partners appropriate for the intended contribution of partners within the research proposal? • Are requests for equipment (>£10,000) fully justified? **Research involving cohort resources** • Applicants must be clear which costs relate to de novo data collection, analysis of new data and/or maintenance or use of existing data

Partnership Grant assessment criteria

Additional criteria specific to a programme grant are italicised.

Importance	• How important are the research questions, or gaps in knowledge, that would be addressed? • *Is the proposed work a "programme", i.e. a coordinated and coherent group of related projects to answer an inter-related set of questions?* • *Does the work require long-term and extensive support?* • Are the research questions driven by LMIC country needs?
Scientific potential	**Research Quality** • What are the prospects for good scientific progress? • How convincing and coherent is the management strategy proposed? • Are the methodological approaches the most relevant to answer the research questions? Robust methodology and experimental research design should be at the centre of any proposal to aid reproducibility of research findings. • How well have project risks been identified, and will they be mitigated? • Have appropriate capacity building activities been embedded within the research proposal? **Research Environment and People** • *From the applicant's track record of research, do they have the potential to successfully manage and deliver a major research programme?* • What is the track record and standing in the field of the named applicants? Reviewers should take account of preprints in considering applications, noting the content of the papers, not where they, or subsequent peer reviewed papers, are published. • How appropriate is the expertise of the applicants to the proposed work? Does the research team have the necessary disciplinary expertise to undertake the study? • Have LMIC researchers had intellectual input into the setting of the research agenda and its ongoing strategic direction? Are the partnerships equitable? • Has attention been paid to gender equality within the research team? • Is the proposed environment(s) suitable and does it have the variety of expertise and disciplines to support a programme? • *Has the host institution(s) demonstrated a clear commitment to the proposed programme for the duration of the grant?* • Are any collaborators well chosen? • *Does the environment provide appropriate opportunities for training and career development of personnel supported on the grant?* • *Are there any dependencies on other organisations or funding of which the MRC should be made aware?* • Have relevant stakeholders been identified and engaged from outside of the academic community? If they have not yet been engaged are there clear plans to do so?

- Where a new research network is proposed, is the membership (geographical and disciplinary) and management structure of the network appropriate? Will it add value to existing networks?

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- What is the potential economic and societal impact of the proposed research in LMICs? Please comment on:
  - identification of realistic potential improvements to human or population health
  - contribution to relieving disease/disability burden and/or improving quality of life
  - identification of potential impacts of research and plans to deliver these
  - Is there sufficient engagement with relevant stakeholders within the country/countries of focus to enable appropriate dissemination of the research findings?
  - Where appropriate, has consideration been given to how scale up of the research findings into policy and practice would occur? What is the likelihood of uptake of the research findings e.g. has a cost effectiveness evaluation, where relevant, been included as part of the proposed research?
  - Has consideration been given to the impact of the research on gender equality?
  - Are the findings likely to be generalizable to other relevant settings?

Ethics

- Are there any ethical and/or research governance issues? Please comment on:
  - whether the proposed research is ethically acceptable
  - any ethical issues that need separate consideration
  - appropriateness of ethical review and research governance considerations
  - any potential adverse consequences for humans, animals or the environment and whether these risks have been addressed satisfactorily in the proposal

Data Management Plan – *please note that a detailed data management plan document is only required if invited to submit a full application.*

- Does the data management plan indicate whether the applicants have (or are likely to have) a sound plan for managing the research data funded through the award, taking account:
  - the types, scale and complexity of data being (or to be) managed
  - the likely long-term value for further research including by sharing data
  - the anticipated information security and ethics requirements.

MRC Industrial Collaboration Awards (MICA)

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- If the proposal has been identified as a MICA, it will also need to convince the relevant research board or funding panel that:
  - the planned research could or would not be undertaken in the absence of the requested funding, or that it could not be undertaken to the quality level or timescale proposed
  - the collaboration or partnership is consistent with the aims and delivery of the project and MRC funding rules and requirements for academic-industry collaborations
  - potential conflicts of interest between the parties are acceptable and are being, or would be, appropriately managed

Research involving cohort resources

- For any research proposal involving a cohort.
- What new health research questions or hypotheses will it be possible to answer over the next five to ten years using the cohort resource?
- Why can this science be addressed using this cohort above other resources?

	• What does this cohort offer that other cohorts do not (nationally and internationally) and how does it relate to other relevant cohorts? Applicants should either list the assets (measures, specimens, population group) as an Annex or reference the cohort website. • What are the plans for establishing the cohort as a resource – how is it/will it be used by the wider research community?
Resources requested	*Please note that at the outline stage only limited information is required on the resources requested. Please see guidance provided above.* • Are the funds requested essential for the work and justified by the importance and scientific potential of the research? • Is the applicants' stated time commitment to the work appropriate and sufficient? • Where the MRC is being asked to fund investigator salaries, are the requests in each case reasonable? • Does the proposal demonstrate value for money in terms of the resources requested? • Is the distribution of funding across partners appropriate for the intended contribution of partners within the research proposal? • Are requests for equipment (>£10,000) fully justified? **Research involving cohort resources** • Applicants must be clear which costs relate to de novo data collection, analysis of new data and/or maintenance or use of existing data

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