



DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnerships Call

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) India

The Medical Research Council (MRC) UK

How to apply to the UK Medical Research Council

This guidance is for applicants wishing to apply to the UK Medical Research Council in response to the DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnerships call.

This guidance supplements the MRC Handbook for Applicants and Grant holders:

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/documents/pdf/handbook-for-applicants-and-grant-holders/>

The present document provides additional information specific to the DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnerships call for proposals. Where guidance in this present document differs from that in the MRC Handbook for Applicants and Grant holders, please follow the guidance in this present, scheme specific, document.

The DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnerships Call funds collaboration between researchers in the UK and India who have pre-existing links. The UK and Indian applicants should apply separately to their respective funding agencies for the funding component requested within each country, but this must be based on a common plan.

Both partners must submit an **identical joint Case for Support** written in English. Failure to submit a valid application to both agencies, unless exceptionally approved and agreed between the agencies, will invalidate both submissions.

UK applicants considering applying to this call should first contact the MRC in order to establish their eligibility. Please email International@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk providing details of the UK and Indian centres/consortia in the partnership; the on-going collaborative research activities; and the current MRC/DBT funding the researchers are in receipt of.

Once eligibility has been confirmed, the UK Principal Investigator should complete the DBT-MRC Joint Centre Application Form and email this to International@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk by the deadline of **16:00 Greenwich Mean Time on 29th September 2014**.



There is no requirement to submit this application via the RCUK Joint electronic-Submission (Je-S) system.

Eligibility

It is imperative that both Indian and UK partners are in receipt of current MRC and DBT funding.

Applications are welcome from applicants based in centres as well as from individual researchers coming together to form consortia.

For the purposes of this call, a centre is defined as below:

A Centre consists of an association of researchers at a single institution (or more than one if geographically co-located), focusing on a clear strategic direction in areas of importance for medical research. Centres have well-resourced programmes, which provide intellectually stimulating environments and maximum knowledge transfer: facilitating excellent collaborative research. Centres also have an important role in capacity development in a focused area, developing outstanding researchers with specialist and transferable skills.

Consortium:

An association of researchers based at different institutions coming together to form a consortium (or a virtual centre) would also be eligible for funding under this initiative. Consortia would need to demonstrate, however, that they possess the qualities of a centre (see above definition) and the strength of the collaboration must be sufficiently strong to achieve the aims of this call. The consortium must also satisfy all other eligibility requirements (see below).



Applications will require both UK and Indian Principal Investigators. Applicants must be eligible to apply for funding from their respective country's funding agency:

- For the UK participants, standard RCUK/MRC eligibility criteria as described in the applicant's handbook and RCUK website will apply. MRC Units and Institutes are also eligible to apply to this call.
- Indian applicants should refer to the DBT eligibility rules for this call.

Importantly, this call is only open to partnerships between UK and Indian centres/consortia which can provide evidence of pre-existing and on-going collaborative activity.

Please refer queries to the international mailbox: International@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

Evaluation process

Following submission, the MRC and DBT will undertake a parallel and independent review process in accordance with each funder's practice. To be funded, proposals must be of a standard at least equivalent to that normally expected to be supported by each funding organisation.

If shortlisted, the UK Principal Investigator will be invited to attend a panel hearing in London on: 18th November 2014. Applicants should ensure they are available on this date. Further details will be provided if shortlisted.

Applications will be assessed by a joint DBT-MRC Panel on 27th November 2014. A positive recommendation of support from each funding body is required in order for a joint award to be made.

As the primary focus of this call is to develop and enhance research partnerships, applications will not undergo a remote peer-review process.



Assessment Criteria

Key assessment criteria for the submissions will be:

- Design and feasibility of the centre proposal
- Scientific Rationale: novelty, importance and timeliness of the joint research proposal
- Partnership development: including strength and clarity of collaborations and opportunities provided, quality of the project management structure proposed; added value of the joint partnership
- Significance and impact of the research partnership
- Capacity building potential
- Quality and suitability of the research environment and of the facilities
- Value for money
- Ethical considerations and governance arrangements.

Review

Each partnership will be assessed after two years.

Application Form

The application form must be prepared using:

- Arial font, with a minimum font size of 11 pt. (excluding text on diagrams and the use of mathematical symbols)
- A minimum of single line spacing
- Standard character spacing
- Margins must not be less than 2cm.

When completing your full stage application:

- Please refer to the assessment criteria for this scheme (see above).
- Please take into consideration the details of the call specification

Applications must include:

1. *A Covering letter (optional)*
2. *DBT-MRC Proforma (including Justification of Resources)*
3. *Joint case for Support*
4. *CVs*
5. *Letters of Support*

All documentation must be merged (in the above listed order) and submitted as a single PDF.

1. Covering Letter (optional)

If you wish to include a Covering Letter it should be no more than 2 x A4 pages using 11 point Arial. The Covering letter can be used to cover details such as Conflicts of Interest, names of conflicted experts who should not be used as referees and if the application is a resubmission, details of how this application differs from that submitted previously.

2. DBT-MRC Proforma

Please refer to page 25 of the MRC Handbook for Applicants and Grant holders for guidance on how to fill in the resources section of the proforma.

The DBT-MRC Proforma (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/documents/doc/dbt-mrc-proforma/>) contains a section entitled '**Justification of Resources**'. Please refer to the MRC Handbook for Applicants and Grant holders, section 4.2.3 (page 19). The JoR should be no more than 3 sides of A4. This statement should be used to justify the resources required to establish the joint centre and is mandatory.

Please remember funding can be used for travel, subsistence and other activities, such as workshops or exchanges; as well as for salary costs, consumables, items of equipment and other research costs. Funding under this call should enhance collaboration between UK and India.

In addition to the standard content for the Justification of Resources, applicants should include a statement of the approximate total UK pound/INR value for resources requested by their partner from DBT-MRC.

3. ***Joint Case for Support***

A joint Case for Support, written in English, should be submitted by both the UK and Indian applicants.

The case for support should not exceed 12 sides of A4 plus one additional page for references. Applicants should describe how the below listed points will be addressed, but are **not** required to rigidly follow the below format. The headings have been designed simply to guide applicants.

1. Title
2. Summary of aims and objectives
 - *Joint centre plans and deliverables*
 - *Purposes and expected outcome of activities*
3. Importance of the DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnership
 - *Please outline your vision for the DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnership*
 - *Explain the need for a joint UK-India partnership centre in this research area*
 - *Describe how current collaborative research activities would be enhanced*
 - *Describe the mutual scientific benefit for the partnership's nodes*
 - *Describe how the funding would enhance the existing partnership and how this would strengthen the strategic relationship between the UK and India*
 - *Address issues of ownership, direction and sustainability*
4. DBT-MRC Joint Centre Partnership Programme
 - *Please describe and justify each of the planned partnership activities and the expected outcomes (please see the web/call text for examples of activities)*
5. Capacity building
 - *Please give details of how the award would make a distinctive contribution to, and likely impact on, specific national research skills needs and to those prioritised for this competition in particular.*
 - *Describe how you consider the partnership activities provided will strengthen the academic base in the broad disciplinary area or field.*

6. Scientific potential: People and track record

- *CVs will be uploaded separately but please elaborate on why the group is well qualified to establish a joint centre in your field of research.*
- *Provide evidence of pre-existing and on-going collaborative working between the Indian and UK partners.*
- *Applicants should acknowledge previous and current MRC and DBT funding (please provide grant references) and describe progress to date on delivery of this research.*
- *Explain how the investigators named in the proposal would work together and how the joint centre partnership would be project managed.*

7. Scientific potential: Research environment

- *Describe how the scientific or clinical environments in which the research will be done will promote delivery of the proposed centre.*
- *Explain how the centre will benefit from facilities provided by the host Research Organisations.*
- *Describe any clinical, commercial, or organisational dependencies necessary to support the research, or to help translate it into practice.*

8. Consideration of ethical, governance and IP issues

9. Data preservation, exploitation and dissemination

4. CVs and List of Publications

Please submit a maximum of 3 pages per investigator: 2 pages CV and 1 page publication list. Please compile the CVs in the same order as the investigators are listed on the proforma. Each publication list should immediately follow its corresponding CV.

Please include separate CV documents/attachments (CV including list of publications) for each of the following:

- Principal Investigators



- Co-investigator
- Named individual research staff

The CV should cover:

- Employment History
- A description of your current post and the source(s) of funding for this post (inc. dates)
- List & description of previous posts (inc. previous dates)
- Educational Qualifications (inc. dates)

Please also state whether you are:

- Clinically qualified
- Clinically active

The CV should explain any breaks in employment or publication record, for example as a result of a career break or parental leave. The MRC is committed to eliminating unjustified discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. Details of our Equality and Diversity policy are available at:

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/About/Informationandstandards/EqualityandDiversity/index.htm>

The publications list should highlight relevant and recent publications, which should fit on a maximum of one side of A4 in Arial 11-point font (or equivalent).

5. Letters of Support

The Letter of Support (up to 2 sides of A4) should be provided on headed paper, dated and must include the signature of the director in the collaborating organisation.

It must:

- Confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed centre partnership.
- Identify the value, relevance and possible benefits of the proposed work to the project partner.
- State the period of support.
- Detail the full nature of the collaboration and how the partner will be involved in the collaboration and specifically the value they will add.