

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Full proposal deadline: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 16:00 GMT+1

### **Eligibility**

#### ➤ **What is ODA?**

The Newton Fund forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ODA funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the [OECD Development Assistance Committee](#). Newton Fund countries represent a sub-set of this list.

For more information on ODA please refer to the [RCUK Newton Fund Guidance](#).

#### ➤ **How do I know if my project is ODA compliant?**

All projects funded from the UK side by the Newton Fund have to be Official Development Assistance (ODA) compliant. The most important aspect to remember when developing your project is that the primary purpose of ODA is the economic development and/or welfare of the developing country. For further information please see [the ODA guidance](#).

#### ➤ **What is the tenure?**

MRC – Thai Research Grants can be up to 3 years in duration. Due to the spending restrictions and time timescales on the Newton Fund all grants are expected to start by 1 April 2018 and must end by 31 March 2021.

#### ➤ **What formal qualification should the PI have?**

**UK PI:** The MRC [guidance for applicants](#), section 1.3.1 state: "The minimum formal qualification required is a graduate degree, most applicants are also expected to have a PhD. Proposals from less experienced PIs should normally include a senior colleague as a Co-Investigator".

For this research call, you may wish to give this careful consideration as you may not be as competitive as some of the applicants who already hold PhDs.

**Thai PI:** The Thai PI must have been awarded a doctorate or have equivalent research experience at the time of application. Applicants working towards a PhD, or awaiting the outcome of their viva/submission of corrections are not eligible to apply.

#### ➤ **Can I be a Principal Investigator (PI) on more than one proposal?**

You can only be a PI on one application but can be a Co-Investigator (CO-I) on multiple applications.

#### ➤ **Are there any additional ethical requirements for international collaborations?**

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigators and the Research Organisations to ensure that for any study, appropriate ethical approval is granted and adhered to, and that no research requiring ethical approval is initiated until it has been granted.

MRC current policy is that for research involving humans to be undertaken overseas, **both local and UK ethical approval is required**. The Principal Investigator/ Research Organisation must be prepared to furnish the MRC with a copy of the ethical approval, and any correspondence with the committees, if requested by the Council.

➤ **Can I propose research involving animals?**

Yes. Applicants must ensure that all of the proposed research, both that in the UK and international country, will comply with the principles of the MRC, and other UK funders. Please see common guidance on “**Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research**” <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/news-events/publications/responsibility-in-the-use-of-animals-in-research/>

Please ensure to read section 5.6 “use of animals” in the [UK-Thailand guidance for applicants](#)

➤ **When should my collaboration agreement be in place?**

This should be in place before the grant starts

## **Funding**

➤ **Will my award be made with the Full Economic Costing (FEC) framework?**

Yes, the UK costs are awarded within the FEC framework. If a grant is awarded the MRC will provide funding at a rate of 80% of the FEC and the research organisation(s) must agree to fund the balance of the FEC for the project from other resources.

➤ **As we will cost on a FEC basis, would the MRC allow the University to recover a reduced rate for estates and indirect costs?**

No, we cannot allow the Research Organisation to recover a reduced rate for estates and indirect costs

➤ **Are there limits on the funding I can request?**

We have up to £3m of MRC funding available for this initiative (up to £1.5m per call). NSTDA and TRF funds will be made available to fund the Thai collaborations. NSTDA have £670k for Infectious Diseases, and TRF have £540k for Non-Communicable Diseases.

MRC will provide funding for the UK-based applicants under standard arrangements and at 80% FEC. Thai funders will provide funding for the Thai applicants according to the usual NSTDA and TRF funding guidelines.

It is expected that this funding will support approximately 4 joint projects per call (i.e. approximately 8 projects in total across the two calls), depending on the number and quality of proposals received.

All requests for resources must be justified in terms of delivering the objectives of the research proposal.

➤ **Can I apply for equipment/capital costs?**

Capital costs above £10,000 cannot be funded via the Newton-Fund and therefore any capital costs requested will not be accepted.

➤ **Can I apply for publication costs?**

Publication costs cannot be applied for, for the UK component of the project and should not form part of your application. This is in line with RCUK terms and conditions. These costs are available from your Research Organisation via the block grant they receive for Publication costs. If you are experiencing difficulties in obtaining funds to cover publications, please contact us, [RFPD@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk](mailto:RFPD@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk)

➤ **Can I request travel costs for my family if I spend time overseas?**

Yes, travel costs for your spouse and/or children can be requested if the applicant intends to spend over 6 months abroad and their family will accompany them for the whole period.

➤ **How should costs associated with travel or subsistence be allocated?**

There are no specific rules regarding travel and subsistence costing's for proposals. In international collaborations there is a precedent for the country sending a researcher to pay for the airfare and the country hosting to pay for accommodation, but there is no specific requirement. As with all costs, a clear explanation will be necessary to justify all travel and associated costs.

➤ **Can we allocate a small portion of the UK-side funding for fieldwork and staff costs in Thailand?**

MRC funding will be provided to the UK HEI but can be spent on activities in Thailand which are outside of the funding available from the Thai funders and when identified and justified in the proposal. This must be agreed in advance of submission with the funders.

As this is a partnership call, research effort should be comparable on both sides and therefore, there should be joint intellectual leadership and project management. All costs will need to be fully justified in the Case for Support and justification of resource for the reviewers and panel to understand your objectives.

➤ **Where do I record my international PI's and Co-I's costs?**

These costs should be recorded on the Thai Costs Pro-forma – **TRF Budget Pro-forma for Non-Communicable Diseases** and **NSTDA Budget Pro-forma for Infectious Diseases**. The costs should be calculated using the international currency. This should be PDF'd and

uploaded onto the Je-S system in the attachments under 'Letters of Support', please ensure you title the document 'NSTDA' or 'TRF' Budget Pro-forma so it is easily identifiable.

- **Would the entire amount of funds (UK and Thai components) be paid to the UK Research Organisation and then the Research Organisation would need to transfer the resources to the Thai PI for fieldwork etc?**

MRC will provide the funds for the UK component of the project and this will go through the normal MRC process where the offer letter will be addressed to the UK PI and sent to your Research Organisation. Thai funders will provide separate funds to the Thai component of the project. Please ensure to only include the UK costs on the Je-S proposal form and attach the budget pro-forma before submitting your application. Please also include justification of all costs (UK and Thai) on your justification of resource form.

- **Can we apply for costs of non UK/Thai collaborators?**

The funders' principle for this research call is to elevate research capabilities between Thailand and the UK scientific community. Therefore, collaboration with non-UK or non-Thai researchers should be done on a voluntary basis. (i.e. the allocation of funding must remain in Thailand and UK host institutions only.

A non UK/Thai collaborator can be included on the grant as a project partner if they will be contributing time or additional funds.

### **How to apply**

- **How do I apply?**

All applications to the MRC must now be made through the RCUK Joint electronic-Submissions system (Je-S). The URL for the Je-S application system is: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>

- **Is this a research grant or a partnership grant?**

One of the reasons why we would return your application for amendment is if it has been submitted as a partnership grant. Please ensure your proposal is submitted as a **research grant**.

- **Will you accept an application if we did not submit an expression of interest?**

Yes, we will not decline an application form if we did not receive an expression of interest. The Expression of Interest did not form an assessment process.

- **Which documents are mandatory to attach to my application and which are optional?**

All applications consist of a number of components. The following are mandatory:

- A completed Je-S form  
All UK and Thai investigators **MUST** be included. This form reflects the UK costs, so while the Thai investigators should be included, hours charged for Thai Investigators should be 0.
- CV and publications for all PI's, CO-I's and named researchers ( 2 pages CV and 1 page publications)
- A jointly prepared Case for Support (up to 8 pages including; references, a statement on ODA compliant and timelines/Gantt charts)
- Justification of Resources (up to 3 pages)
- Pathways to Impact
- Data Management Plan
- NSTDA Budget Pro-Forma/TRF Budget Pro-Forma
- Joint funding summary (template on webpage)
- Signed letters of support
  - From Thai Research Organisation demonstrating support for the proposed research project.
  - Where the Thai partner or another third party (ANY organisation other than the UK RO) is responsible for recruitment of people as research participants and/or providing human tissue
  - From any project partner where an in kind payment is being contributed.
  - From both PI's when animal research is proposed. Please see section 5.5 in this guidance "use of animals" for further information

The following are optional:

- A covering letter (2 pages)
- A Reproducibility and Statistical design annex can be included in your case for support (1 page)

➤ **What should I upload the Thai costs pro-forma as on Je-S**

Please upload as a letter of support but titled in the description field "Thai budget pro-forma"

➤ **Does my application have to be submitted through my research organisation's administration department?**

Yes. You will need to ensure that your research organisation is registered on Je-S as an administering authority in order to submit your proposal. Further information and guidance is available on the Je-S Help Pages [opens in new window](#).

Please note that when an application is submitted through Je-S it does not pass directly to the MRC, but to the Research Organisation's administration team who will then process the submission to the MRC

You are strongly advised to contact the team responsible for proposal submissions at your Research Organisation to confirm how much time they will need to process your application

and complete the submission process. All applications must be submitted to the MRC via the RCUK Joint electronic-Submission system by 4pm on the advertised closing date.

- **How much time will my Research Organisation need to process my application before submitting it to MRC?**

This will depend on your Research Organisation and you will need to contact the team responsible for submissions to confirm this.

- **Can I submit offline instead of using Je-S?**

No. All applications must be submitted via Je-S.

- **If my application does not reach MRC by the deadline can it still be considered?**

No. Applications not submitted by 4pm on the day of the deadline will not be considered.

- **Do all investigators need to be registered on Je-S?**

**Yes.** For any submission through the UK Research Council online submission system which is used by the MRC, **ALL named investigators** (Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators) must be registered users. For this initiative, that includes all named UK and international investigators. Easy instructions to register are available [here](#). For help with using Je-S please contact the Je-S helpdesk:

Email: [JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk)

Phone: +44 (0)1793 444164

Je-S website: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>

- **Is it ok if the international applicants do not start their grant on the same day?**

Yes – The first payment from MRC will be made at end of June/beginning of July but projects should commence earlier.

- **What should my start date be in the Je-S System?**

As stated in the call text, due to the tight timescales and funding restrictions of the Newton Fund, the proposed start date on the Je-S system must be before 1 April 2018, the grant must end by 31 March 2021.

Please note that in order to start the grant the start confirmation must be submitted by 1 May 2018 (shorter than the standard 42 days for Research Council grants). Please refer to <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/documents/pdf/guidance-for-applicants-and-award-holders/> for information on what the starting procedure entails; please ensure that you inform the relevant support staff in your organisation of this requirement to ensure the project starts on time.

➤ **What is a project partner?**

Letters of support are needed for any organisations entered on the Je-S form as 'Project Partners'. A Project Partner is an organisation which contributes in cash or in kind to the project but which is not requesting any money from the project. Therefore a Project Partner cannot be either a Co-Investigator or from the Principal Investigator or Co-investigators' Organisations.

➤ **How do I put the UK Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators on the Je-S form?**

Please input the UK PI under the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigators under Co-Investigator as normal, unlike with the international partner Co-I's, you will also need to record all the costs, including the number of hours.

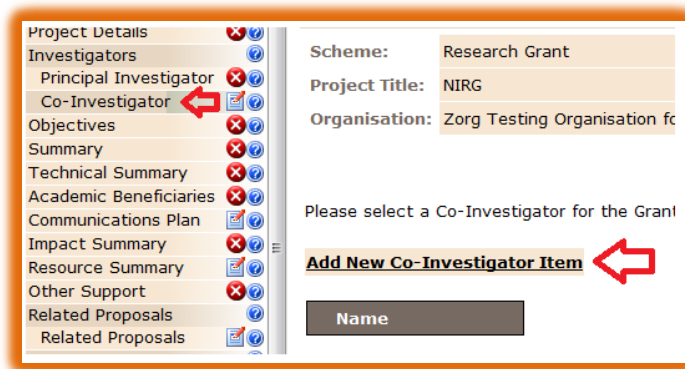
➤ **How do I add the International Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators to the Je-S form?**

The Je-S form only allows there to be 1 Principal Investigator on a grant. Although in reality grants under this scheme will have two Co-PI's, for the purposes of completing the Je-S form, please enter the UK PI on to the system as the PI. Please add the International PI on to the Je-S form as a Co-Investigator.

Please add all international Co-Investigators on to the form as below:

**From the document menu select Co-Investigator option.**

**Select Add New Co-Investigator Item**



1. Choose the Select option (Je-S Person Search pop-up window appears). Search for and select the Co-Investigator from the search results. **Please note:** Uncheck the tick box so you search for people outside of the lead organisation.
2. Select Yes option

The screenshot shows the Medical Research Council Co-Investigator form. A dialog box titled 'Je-S Person Search' is open, prompting for a surname and initials. The form fields are annotated with red boxes and numbers 1 through 10, corresponding to the instructions below. The form includes sections for project details, investigator information, objectives, and financial data. The 'Save' button is highlighted with a green tick, while other buttons like 'Calculate' and 'Select' have red circles with crosses.

3. Select 'No' as the person will not be an MRC/ESS Staff Member.
4. Indicate the total number of hours the ThaiCo-Investigator will be working on the project. Please note; must be a minimum of 1.
5. Cost Type (defaults to Directly Allocated), leave as DA.
6. Indicate 1 as the salary rate. **Please note** if the Co-I wishes to indicate their annual salary then this should be **converted to sterling**.
7. Contracted Hours per week E.G. if the Co-I's overseas institution contract is fulltime then they should indicate 100. If they have a part-time contract at their RO, please indicate the appropriate % depending on their actual contract.
8. Number of hours charged should be 0 (zero).
9. Select the calculate button (**cost estimate will be 0**). All the costs associated with the Thai PI and Col's will be recorded on the Thai costs proforma.
10. Select the 'Save' to save the information. Section should then validate (green tick instead of red circle with cross).