

## UK-Brazil Neglected Infectious Diseases Partnership

**Closing date: 16:00BST/12.00 Midday Brasilia Time 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015**

The Medical Research Council (MRC), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Brazilian State Funding Agencies: FACEPE; FAPESP; FAPES; FAPEPI; FAPITEC; FUNDECT; FAPES; FAPEAM; FAPEG; FAPEMIG; FAPDF; FAPERGS; FUNDAÇÃO ARAUCÁRIA; FAPERJ; FAPESC; FAPEAP, articulated by the National Council of State Funding Agencies (CONFAP) and the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) invite applications to the UK-Brazil Neglected Infectious Diseases Partnership Call as part of the Newton Fund.

This initiative will provide funding for collaborative research projects, focussed on neglected infectious diseases in Brazil.

In total, up to £4.4m will be made available for this initiative. Up to £2.2m on the UK side (£2m from the MRC and £200k from the ESRC) with equivalent effort matched by the Brazilian funders.

### 1 The Newton Fund

The UK contribution will be channelled from the Newton Fund. The Newton Fund is an initiative intended to strengthen research and innovation partnerships between the UK and emerging knowledge economies. It was launched by the Chancellor in April 2014, and will deliver £375 million of funding over the course of five years.

The 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 list. Newton Fund countries represent a sub-set of this list. For more information, please visit the [MRC Newton Fund page](#).

The Newton Fund requires that the funding be awarded in a manner that fits with [Official Development Assistance \(ODA\) guidelines](#). All applications under this call must therefore be compliant with these guidelines.

### 2 Background

Neglected Infectious Diseases are a group of diseases, caused by parasitic, bacterial, fungal, ectoparasitic or viral agents that cause substantial illness for more than one billion people globally<sup>1</sup>. They are so named due to the lack of large investment into the development of new drugs and vaccines to prevent their transmission and minimise their effects, and because existing programmes to control these diseases are not sufficient.

A wide range of social and economic factors contribute to the persistence of Neglected Infectious Diseases. The social and economic impacts of Neglected Infectious Diseases

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/ntd/>

are also significant in terms of limiting ability to work and earn a living, produce food for the household and attend school.

According to the WHO, several of the world's major Neglected Infectious Diseases occur in Brazil, with differing burdens between regions. Leishmaniasis, dengue fever and leprosy are present over almost the entire Brazilian territory<sup>2</sup>. However, the most significantly affected regions are those in the North and North East, which have both lowest Human Development Indices and the highest rates of Neglected Infectious Diseases.

The launch of this call follows the success of the UK-Brazil Infectious Disease Workshop which took place in October 2014. The workshop was convened by the funding agencies participating in this partnership and attended by eminent Brazilian and British researchers in the field of infectious diseases in order to scope the development of this call. The outcome of this workshop was that this call should focus on neglected infectious diseases of relevance to Brazil but not be constrained in terms of the type of biomedical or social research.

### 3 Scope

Through this call, the funders are specifically looking for proposals that target biomedical, social and/or economic research studies in neglected infectious diseases that place a significant burden upon the poorest and most vulnerable in Brazilian society.

Proposals may focus on, but are not limited to, the following disease areas:

- Dengue fever and other vector-borne diseases (e.g. Chikungunya)
- Leishmaniasis
- Chagas disease
- Leprosy
- Schistosomiasis
- Intestinal helminth infections
- Rotaviruses
- Emerging viruses

Proposals with a focus upon HIV, TB and Malaria have been excluded from this call on the basis that they already receive relatively robust financial support.

The funders welcome proposals across the full spectrum of research including, but not limited to:

- Basic, aetiological and exploratory research relevant to disease pathogens.
- Epidemiology, aetiology, biomarker; and
- Human Disease relevant vector control research.
- Host pathogen response, development of protective immune responses.
- Investigation of behavioral, social and/or economic determinants of the disease.
- Public health, prevention and health and social care.

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. Inst. Med. Trop. S. Paulo vol 51 no 5 2009

Beyond the expected outputs regarding the publication of scientific articles, thesis and dissertations, projects funded under this scheme should have scientific outcomes of relevance to the development of approaches addressing the prevention, treatment, diagnosis or control of neglected infectious diseases in Brazil.

Research to understand and influence the relevant social and economic factors and implications surrounding these diseases is encouraged. For example, research questions looking into inequalities and access to healthcare, which plays a crucial role in ensuring that these diseases are diagnosed and managed in the most effective manner.

Given the funding available, it is not proposed that the research will involve large scale efficacy trials

The MRC element of funding will not cover UK PhD studentships.

The Brazilian element of funding may cover scholarships according to each FAP modalities available (PhD sandwich and Post-Doctoral). FAPs will cover the scholarship costs should applicants choose to include them in their application. Please note, the inclusion of scholarships is not mandatory.

The development of interdisciplinary collaborations is particularly welcome (although not a requirement of the call).

For further information, please read the [FAQ document](#).

#### **4 Objectives and remit**

The UK-Brazil Neglected Infectious Diseases Partnership initiative aims to provide support for joint Brazilian and UK working in the area of neglected infectious disease research.

The objective is to deliver significant 2-3 year research funding for internationally competitive and innovative collaborative projects between scientists from Brazil and the UK that will allow the pursuit of shared research interests.

#### **5 Funding available**

The MRC will make up to £2.0m available for this scheme with ESRC contributing an additional £200k on the UK side to support high quality social science aspects of successful proposals. These funds will be made available to the UK collaborators.

The £2.2m made available by the UK funders will be matched with equivalent effort from the Brazilian FAPs, who will fund the Brazilian collaborators.

The agencies would expect to fund approximately 8-12 projects in total. The size of the grants will vary according to the needs of each research project.

Applicants do not need to request equal amounts from both sides. The difference in values should reflect the difference in costs covered and local prices. The agencies also expect the costs on each side to accurately reflect the research effort to be carried out. What is expected is that the research effort on both sides be comparable.

For further information on eligible costs, please read the [FAQ](#).

## 6 Eligibility

This call funds partnership working between UK and Brazil based researchers.

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

6.1. For the UK participants, standard RCUK/MRC eligibility criteria as described in the [Guidance for Applicants](#) and [RCUK website](#) will apply. MRC Units and Institutes are also eligible to apply to this call.

6.2. Brazilian applicants should refer to CONFAP's eligibility rules for this call. Please contact [mrc-confap-cnpq@cnpq.br](mailto:mrc-confap-cnpq@cnpq.br) or (for applicants applying to FAPESP) [chamada\\_nf\\_neglected\\_diseases@fapesp.br](mailto:chamada_nf_neglected_diseases@fapesp.br) for further guidance relating to eligibility queries.

**Please note it is important to check that the relevant Brazilian state funding agency ("FAP") is participating in this call – not all Brazilian FAPs have agreed to participate.** The list of participating FAPs can be found <http://confap.org.br/news/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Participating-FAPs-MRC-CONFAP-CNPq-Call.pdf>.

6.3. Applicants from the State of São Paulo, Brazil who are interested in applying to this call are encouraged to contact FAPESP before starting to develop a joint proposal in order to understand the requirements for proposal qualification practiced by FAPESP for Thematic Grants (announced at <http://www.fapesp.br/176>). **Failure to observe this procedure may result in the rejection of the proposal, without review.** Please also consult the FAPESP Guidelines associated with this call: [www.fapesp.br/9397](http://www.fapesp.br/9397).

## 7 Intention to submit

In order to identify peer reviewers and convene assessment panels in advance, it is important that researchers indicate their intention to submit a proposal. Please email a preliminary indication as outlined below by 1<sup>st</sup> of June to the following addresses:

UK applicants: [international@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk](mailto:international@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk)

Brazilian applicants: [mrc-confap-cnpq@cnpq.br](mailto:mrc-confap-cnpq@cnpq.br)

São Paulo applicants: [chamada\\_nf\\_neglected\\_diseases@fapesp.br](mailto:chamada_nf_neglected_diseases@fapesp.br)

Applicant Role	Name	Organisation
Principal Investigator (UK)		
Principal Investigator (Brazil)		
List of all Co-Investigators		
Project Title		

**Summary of proposed project** (maximum 200 words. Please note: this will be used when approaching potential reviewers in the first instance)

## 8 How to apply

Once the collaboration is formed, UK and Brazilian applicants must apply separately to their respective funding agencies for the funding component requested within each country, but this must be based around a common scientific plan. Both partners must therefore submit an **identical** joint Case for Support (“Projeto de Pesquisa”) written in English. Failure to submit a valid application to both sponsors, unless exceptionally approved and agreed between the sponsors, will invalidate both submissions.

Applications from the UK Principal Investigator should be submitted to the UK Research Councils’ [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\)](#) System. UK applicants must complete all sections required for a standard MRC Research Grant proposal. CV’s including a concise publication list for each of the named investigators should be included for all investigators (based in Brazil and the UK).

Please also fill in and submit the ‘[Joint Funding Summary](#)’ form. Please upload this under the attachment type ‘Letter of Support’.

Justification of Resources, Pathways to Impact and Data Management Plan documents must also be attached to the Je-S application. Further guidance can be found in the [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#). For further information, please read the FAQ document.

Brazilian Principal Investigators must submit an identical case for support (“Projeto de pesquisa”) written in English to CNPq (<http://picc.cnpq.br/efomento/form/47-559>) available from May the 15<sup>th</sup> or – if the PI is from São Paulo State - submit to through the SAGE and should observe its eligibility rules as described at the FAPESP’s guidelines (<http://www.fapesp.br/9397>).

The funding agencies will not play a further role in linking UK and Brazilian research groups beyond the organisation of the workshop that took place in October. It is important to note, however, that this is an open call: applicants do **not** need to have attended the workshop in order to apply.

## 9 Key Dates

<b>Closing Date for investigators to indicate their intention to submit a proposal (item 7, above)</b>	<b>1st June 2015</b>
<b>Closing Date for investigators to submit proposal to MRS, FAPESP and CONFAP</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 16:00BST/12.00 Midday Brasilia Time</b>

<b>Panel Meeting</b>	<b>October 2015</b>
<b>Successful proposals announced</b>	<b>November 2015</b>

## 10 Grant Start Dates

Due to the tight timescales and funding restrictions of the Newton Fund, UK grants must start by 15th January 2016; i.e. the 'start confirmation' must be submitted by 15th January 2016 (this is shorter than the standard 42 days for Research Council grants).

Please refer to the [MRC Applicants Handbook](#) 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.

## 11 Additional Guidance for "Case for Support" and "Justification of Resources"

The UK and Brazilian applicants should submit a joint Case for Support, written in English. For the UK applicants this must be attached as a PDF to the J-eS application.

Briefly, the case for support may be up to 8 pages in length, including 1 page for references, 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 and expected outcomes
- People and track record
- Research environment
- Research plans and deliverables
- Consideration of ethical, governance and IP issues around the project
- Data preservation, exploitation and dissemination
- In addition, applicants must describe how the proposed UK funded work is ODA compliant [up to 150 words]. This section will be made publicly available. For further information on ODA, please visit: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/international/ODAguidanceRCUKspecific.pdf>

Generic Guidance on content under each of these headings can be found in the [MRC applicant's handbook](#).

## 12 Evaluation process

Following submission, peer-review will be undertaken by the funding agencies. 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:

- Significance and Impact
- Scientific Rationale: novelty, importance and timeliness of the research;
- Design and Feasibility of the Project Plan (including the appropriateness of the research design, work plan, research team);
- Partnership: including strength and clarity of collaborations and opportunities provided, quality of the project management structure proposed;
- Quality and suitability of the research environment and of the facilities;
- Value for money for Brazilian and UK science;
- Ethical considerations and governance arrangements.
- ODA compliance.

Applications received and comments from all peer-reviewers will be assessed by a joint Research Panel in October.

### 13 Contacts and guidance

For further information, UK applicants should contact Alex Harris:  
[international@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk](mailto:international@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk)

For further information, Brazilian applicants:

- a) from São Paulo should contact: [chamada\\_nf\\_neglected\\_diseases@fapesp.br](mailto:chamada_nf_neglected_diseases@fapesp.br)
- b) from other States: [mrc-confap-cnpq@cnpq.br](mailto:mrc-confap-cnpq@cnpq.br)