UKRI-MOHE COLLABORATION ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES

**MALAYSIAN RESEARCHER'S
APPLICATION GUIDELINE**

UKRI – MOHE FULL STAGE APPLICATION GUIDELINE

This guideline document is for applicants wishing to apply to the **UKRI-MOHE Collaboration on Infectious Diseases**. This guideline supplements the UKRI Guideline for Applicants. Please refer to the UKRI Handbook for Applicants for information such as preparing the budget for your proposal and submitting your proposal through the system.

This present guideline document provides additional information specific to this call. Where guideline in the present document differs from that in the UKRI Handbook for Applicants, you should follow the guideline in this present, scheme specific, document.

It is important that applicants read the below document as it includes important additional information that is not covered in the call text.

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UKRI-MOHE COLLABORATION ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES

FUNDERS
- Medical Research Council (on behalf of UKRI)
- Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (MOHE)

FUNDING TYPE
- Research grant

KEY DATES / TIMELINE

Opening date	**14 March 2024**
Deadline for optional Expression of Interest *by UK Project Lead	**14 April 2024 4:00pm UK time**
Closing date	**30 May 2024 4:00pm Malaysia time**
Shortlisting meeting (if required)	**August 2024**
Panel Review meeting	**November 2024**
Expected notification of funding decision	**December 2024**
Successful projects start	**April 2025**

SUMMARY

Apply for funding to collaborate with partners in United Kingdom (UK) on infectious diseases with antimicrobial resistance and epidemics potential.

We will support collaborative research between the Malaysia and UK partner. Research teams must include at least one Malaysian and one UK research organisation to apply for this opportunity.

You can apply for up to £1,000,000 (one million Pounds) from UKRI (for UK partner) and up to RM300,000 (three hundred thousand Ringgit Malaysia) from MOHE (for Malaysian researchers).

1. ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to apply
- Research teams made up of at least one researcher based at an eligible Malaysia institution and at least one researcher based at an eligible UK research institution.
- Additional researchers based in eligible UK institutions are eligible to apply given there is at least one eligible research institution in Malaysia involved in the project. Please refer to UKRI's eligibility for UK applicants.

Who is not eligible to apply
- Research teams made up of only researchers based in Malaysian institutions that do not involve at least one researcher based at an eligible research institution in UK.

MOHE Eligible Applicants

1.1. Organisations eligible to apply are **Public Universities** in Malaysia.

1.2. The Malaysian Principal Investigator (PI) must have been awarded a doctorate at the time of application. Applicants working towards a PhD, post doctorate training, or awaiting the outcome of their viva/submission of corrections are not eligible to apply.

1.3. The applicant must be a **Malaysian citizen academician** and hold a permanent or fixed-term contract in an eligible university or higher learning institute in Malaysia. Applicants with fixed terms contracts finishing before their grant end-date must secure **confirmation from their Head of Department**, stating that their contract will be extended to cover the duration of the award if their application is successful.

1.4. Contact between the Malaysian PI and the UK partner prior to the application is essential. This contact should lead to a clearly defined and mutually beneficial research project proposal. Please note that **MOHE will not be able to assist in locating the UK partner**.

1.5. The Malaysian applicant's employing organisation must be willing to agree to administer the grant.

1.6. Malaysian applicants will need to adhere to MOHE progress and outcomes monitoring requirements.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The Medical Research Council (MRC), UKRI and the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) are pleased to announce a call to fund high quality research projects focused on the infectious diseases relevant to Southeast Asia/Malaysia.

The call will be funded through the UK's International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) and Malaysia Partnerships and Alliances in Research (MyPAiR).

UKRI funding for this partnership will be provided through ISPF Official Development Assistance budget. The ISPF Fund is a joint initiative established to develop and support the research and innovation collaboration between UK and Malaysia. The Fund uses the UK and Malaysia's strengths in research and innovation to support greater scientific research capacity in Malaysia and build partnerships between UK and Malaysian institutions.

Aim

This funding opportunity is to support partnerships between UK researchers and researchers in Malaysia working in collaboration on diseases with epidemic and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) potential. We aim to:

- Fund collaborative projects involving the UK and Malaysia to address the challenges of AMR and pathogens with epidemic potential of relevance to Southeast Asia;
- Enhance existing and develop new sustainable partnerships between the UK and Malaysia research partners; and
- Strengthen research capacity in the Southeast Asia region through supporting long-term research relationships.

Scope

To effectively tackle global infectious disease threats and challenges, including AMR and epidemic preparedness, a One Health approach is required to achieve sustainable change. Such approaches use integrated, interdisciplinary methodologies, recognising the interconnection between humans, animals (including wildlife, livestock, aquatic organism, and companion animals), and environmental (including natural and built environment and climate change) factors, with the goal of improving outcomes for human health, animal health and ecosystems.

This funding opportunity is aligned with the UKRI tackling infection's strategic theme and Health Research Priorities for 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP-HRP) 2021-2025, for which infectious disease epidemics and AMR are priorities.

In this context, we will support research projects that fit within two strategic themes:

i. <u>Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)</u>

Pathogens inevitably evolve resistance to threats in their environments, resulting in widespread and increasing resistance to antimicrobial drugs. The health, social and economic implications of such resistance are potentially catastrophic, returning humanity to a pre-antibiotic age of major mortality and morbidity risk from common infections. The importance of preventing and treating resistance now has global recognition, spanning bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi, and disease vectors.

Because resistance can evolve in one host and then transmit to another, a systemic One Health approach is critical to take on this threat. Priority research needs are well established to investigate the drivers of, and discover the barriers to, the emergence and spread of resistance. Alongside this discovery research, into the transmission and epidemiology of AMR, we need improved methods for predicting, tracking, and tackling resistance. This includes the development of new diagnostics, therapeutics (including both novel and combination therapies), and effective intervention regimes, spanning environmental, cultural, and social approaches.

ii. <u>Epidemic preparedness: Emerging and zoonotic infections</u>

Recent outbreaks of COVID-19, Mpox, Ebola, Zika, bird and swine flu highlight the challenges infectious diseases continue to pose to human health. The threats posed by zoonotic pathogens and emerging infections are clear and these dangers are amplified and accelerated by the growing impact of climate change. The global nature of infectious disease threats is also apparent and research partnerships across national boundaries represent a major opportunity for the scientific community – such partnerships, transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries in a One Health setting, offer a critical international defence against future pathogen threats.

This funding opportunity will consider applications focused on pathogens of relevance to the Southeast Asia region and with potential impact on human health, which may include viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic threats.

3. FUNDING AVAILABLE

What MOHE will fund

We will support a diverse portfolio of activities and examples of areas in which research may be conducted including, but are not limited to:

- Discovery research into the mechanisms underlying AMR or the emergence of pathogens of epidemic potential
- Drug discovery and novel therapeutics
- Development of innovative approaches to surveillance (novel technologies for surveillance)
- Applied research including intervention development and testing (including vaccines, diagnostics), economic and policy research
- Multifaceted evidence-based interventions, including environmental, social, cultural and economic strategies
- Health systems research
- Digital health and artificial intelligence (AI) approaches
- Novel analytical or modelling methods

Applications should demonstrate the added value provided through the international collaboration proposed, which may include access to:

- Knowledge (from bench to bedside)
- Expertise (scientific or socio-cultural)
- Resources
- Cohorts
- Populations

What MOHE will not fund

We will not fund:

- Applications focused on delivery of surveillance and detection programmes
- Studies focusing on plant or crop health or disease
- Applied or 'gain of function' research to enhance the virulence of a pathogen or render a non-pathogen virulent, increase transmissibility of a pathogen or alter the host range of a pathogen

Funding from UKRI

The FEC of your project requested from UKRI can be up to £1,000,000. UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC for costs requested for UK based researchers and 100% of the FEC for costs requested for researchers based outside of the UK. *(Detailed information on the funding available from the UK funding partners is set out on the UKRI's website)*

Funding from MOHE

MOHE will fund costs that are **not borne by UKRI for up to a maximum 5 projects**. Malaysian applicants may apply up to **MYR300,000.00** for each project. Please note that applicants from Malaysia must seek funding from MOHE in the first instance.

MOHE Funding Guidance

Eligible Costs

Vote 11000 Stipend for Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)
Allowance to fund Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) full-time research mode only. Allowance and stipend shall not exceed **RM2,300 for Master's student** or **MYR2,800 for PhD student**. Deduction of GRA allowance for the purpose payment of contributions to the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and the Social Security Organization (SOCSO) are not allowed. Staff costs are not eligible costs.

Vote 21000 Travelling and Transportation
This includes all domestic travelling and transportation relevant to the project. Travelling abroad is only permitted to partner's country for site work and attending conference/seminar/workshop/ attachment relevant to the project. Travelling abroad is subject to grant sufficiency. Only Principal Investigator (PI) and team members are allowed to travel abroad.

The destination chosen for overseas travel should be the most appropriate and economical in terms of facility availability, relevance of expertise and technology transfer. Travelling abroad shall comply with relevant institutions regulations. The total expenditure for Travelling and Transportation shall not exceed 40% of the total project allocation. However, travelling for the purpose of attending conference/seminar/ workshop/ attachment must not exceed 20% of the total project allocation.

Vote 24000 Rental
Rental is only allowed for premises, equipment, transport, and others relevant to the development of the project.

Vote 27000 Research Supplies & Materials
The expenditure may include supplies and materials relevant to the project.

Vote 28000 Minor Repairs and Renovation

The expenditure may include minor repair and renovation on premises, laboratory, equipment, or others relevant to the project. Maintenance cost for existing equipment is allowed during the project implementation period. Upon project completion, such maintenance cost shall not be borne under the grant.

Vote 29000 Consultancies and Other Services

The expenditure may include services relevant to the project including printing, hospitality, honorarium, professional services, consultancies, computer usage, data processing and others.

Vote 35000 Accessories & Equipment

The expenditure may include purchase of equipment and accessories relevant to the project. Purchasing of equipment must adhere to Financial Regulations of the Federal Treasury. The need for purchase must be strongly justified. Quotation must be attached as proof of market study of the equipment. The total application under this Vote shall not exceed 40% of overall project budget. Purchasing of IT and communication equipment (laptop, desktop, phone etc. are not allowed)

4. DURATION

The duration of this award is a maximum of **36 months/3 years**.

Projects must start by **1 April 2025.**

5. HOW TO APPLY

Expression of Interest

Researchers planning to submit to this scheme are encouraged to submit a short Expression of Interest (EOI) by **12.00 am MY time** on **15 April 2024 / 4:00pm UK time** (Greenwich Mean Time) on **14 April 2024**. It is the responsibility of the **UK project lead to submit the EOI** on behalf of the UK and Malaysia research collaboration.

Please note, this step is voluntary and does not form part of the review process if you do not submit an EOI you can still apply to the funding opportunity.

UKRI and MOHE will not undertake eligibility checks at this point. You should not await a response from the funders following the EOI submission, but simply continue with the development of the full proposal to be submitted by the deadline. MOHE and UKRI will use the EOI to help prepare for the review process.

You are not expected to submit an EOI to MOHE as well, however, all details submitted to UKRI will be shared with MOHE.

Application Submission

Via UKRI System

UKRI are running this funding opportunity on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The project lead (PL), who will be based in the UK, is responsible for completing the application process on the UKRI Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application.

Please only list one individual, who is based in the UK, as project lead. All international applicants, including those based in Malaysia, should be listed as **project co-lead international**.

If the lead research organisation is an NHS organisation check it is available in the UKRI Funding Service. You are encouraged to check this early as there may be additional steps for the organisation to be set up before you can apply.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

UK and Malaysia based applicants must apply with jointly developed applications to both the UKRI and MOHE by 30 May 2024 for the funding component requested within each country. The application must be based around a common research plan and vision and be jointly prepared by both UK and Malaysian applicants.

To apply : *https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ukri-southeast-asia-collaboration-on-infectious-diseases/*

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the project lead.

2. Sign in or create a UKRI Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email support@funding-service.ukri.org. Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the UKRI Funding Service.

3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the UKRI Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.

4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.

5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.

6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant.

- Use images sparingly and only to convey important information that cannot easily be put into words.

- Insert each new image onto a new line.

- Provide a descriptive legend for each image immediately underneath it (this counts towards your word limit).

- Files must be smaller than 5mb and in jpeg, jpg, jpe, jfi, jif, jfif, png, gif, bmp or webp format.

Your application may be rejected if images are provided without a descriptive legend in the text box or are used to replace text that could be input into the text box. Watch our research office webinars about the new UKRI Funding Service.

For more guidance on the UKRI Funding Service, see:
- how applicants use the Funding Service
- how research offices use the Funding Service
- how reviewers use the Funding Service

References

Applications should be self-contained, and hyperlinks should only be used to provide links directly to reference information. To ensure the information's integrity is maintained, where possible, persistent identifiers such as digital object identifiers should be used. Assessors are not required to access links to carry out assessment or recommend a funding decision. You should use your discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

References should be included in the appropriate question section of the application and be easily identifiable by the assessors for example, (Smith, Research Paper, 2019). You must not include links to web resources to extend your application.

MOHE Proposal Submission

An identical application must be submitted by the Malaysian PI for administrative purposes using the template provided by MOHE. The format/template differs from the UKRI proposal form but must be filled as close as possible to reflect the proposal submitted to UKRI system.

Applicants are to submit application to UKRI and submit a **copy of UKRI application** & **MOHE Proposal Form** directly to MOHE: -

- Submission via email **danakhas.bkpi@mohe.gov.my** and 1 hardcopy to:

   Bahagian Kecemerlangan Penyelidikan IPT
   Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi
   Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi
   Aras 7, No.2, Menara 2, Jalan P5/6, Presint 5
   62200 Putrajaya
   No. Tel: 03-8870 6969
   (u.p.: Urus setia MyPAiR)

- All applications must be vetted and endorsed by the DVCRI/RMC's Director of the respective Institution before submission to MOHE.

- Enclosed together:
   - MOHE Cost Proforma (details of budget applied)
   - PI's CV
   - Letters of Support for each named UK collaborator listed as a Project Partner

- For research projects funded by this grant and other sources, researchers must declare all funding received for the project.

- Malaysian applicants will need to adhere to MOHE progress and outcomes monitoring requirements.

- Applicants are required to identify and submit risk management plans (risk assessment) for the application.

- Human/Animal Research Ethics Committee approval (if relevant) should be included with the **first progress report**, should the research project be approved.

- Institutions and researchers should comply with the matters stated in the "Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research" (MCRCR).

Deadline

UKRI & MOHE must receive your application by **30 May 2024 at 4.00pm MY/UK time**. You will not be able to apply after this time.

When preparing an application for this call, please take account of the closing date. Your completed proposal together with other relevant documents, should be submitted by the specified closing date. If you miss the call deadline then UKRI & MOHE will not accept your proposal. **Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines**.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guideline, it may be rejected.

6. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

We will assess your application jointly with all the funders participating in this funding opportunity using the following process.

Peer review

We will invite experts to review your application independently, against the specified criteria for this funding opportunity.

UKRI will work in partnership with MOHE to select expert reviewers. We will look to ensure that all applications are reviewed by experts based in each of the countries where the research is taking place.

You will not be able to nominate reviewers for applications on the new UKRI Funding Service. Research councils will continue to select expert reviewers.

We are monitoring the requirement for applicant-nominated reviewers as we review policies and processes as part of the continued development of the new UKRI Funding Service.

Shortlisting

The funders participating in this funding opportunity will decide whether or not a shortlisting stage is needed depending on the number of applications received.

If shortlisting is needed, then experts will review the comments and scores for each application. Shortlisted applications will go to a panel who will make a funding recommendation.

If your application is shortlisted, you will have 14 days to respond to reviewers' comments**.**

If your application is not shortlisted, we will give you the reviewers' comments and any feedback from the shortlisting panel.

Panel

Following peer review, we will invite a panel of international experts to use the evidence provided by reviewers and your applicant response to assess the quality of your application and rank it alongside other applications after which the panel will make a funding recommendation.

The membership of the panel will be jointly agreed by all funders participating in the funding opportunity.

UKRI and MOHE will jointly make the final funding decision.

Each individual funder participating in this funding opportunity will be responsible for issuing grants to its own researchers.

Timescale

We aim to complete the assessment process **within 6 months** of receiving your application. Successful proposals will be expected to start by **April 2025.**

Feedback

If your application was discussed by a panel, we will give feedback with the outcome of your application.

Principles of assessment

UKRI support the San Francisco declaration on research assessment and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity. Find out about the UKRI principles of assessment and decision making. We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

Assessment areas

The assessment areas UKRI & MOHE will use are:

- Vision of the project
- Approach to the project
- Research capacity strengthening plans of the project
- Capability of the applicants, and the project team, to deliver the project
- Ethical and responsible research and innovation considerations of the project
- UK and International resources requested for the project
- Gender equality
- ODA Compliance

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

7. AGREEMENTS

Collaboration Agreement

As the research projects will be carried out by multiple research organisations and project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations and project partners, including ownership of intellectual property (IP) generated during the project and rights to exploitation, and costs of IP management [**this is not an eligible cost to UKRI and MOHE**], is expected to be set out in a formal collaboration agreement between the research organisations involved.

It is the responsibility of the research organisations to put such an agreement in place before the research begins. The terms of collaboration shall not conflict with UKRI and MOHE terms and conditions.

The collaboration agreement should also include the allocation of resources throughout the project.

Arrangements for collaboration and/or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of academic research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with academic custom and practise and the requirements of the funding bodies. A temporary delay in publication is acceptable in order to allow commercial and collaborative arrangements to be established.

Intellectual property

Ownership of intellectual property (IP) generated during the project and rights to exploitation, as well as any costs regarding management of IP, are expected to be agreed between the collaborating research organisations before the research begins. Details of this agreement should be included in the Collaboration Agreement (as above).

Agreements must not conflict with UKRI or MOHE terms and conditions. Any agreements in place between a research organisation and their respective funding organisation must be adhered to, including the sharing of IP costs or benefits. Any IP sharing agreements in place between a research organisation and their national funding body would be expected to apply only to the IP share of that research organisation.

Material Transfer Agreements

Collection and exchange of material may occur between collaborating institutions, as necessary, in strict compliance with the legislation in effect in both countries.

Ethics

Any research involving humans/human tissue and/or animals must comply with legislation in both the UK and Malaysia and must also comply with relevant policies and guideline of the UKRI and MOHE.

It is the absolute responsibility of the PIs and the ROs to ensure that appropriate ethical approval is granted and adhered to, and that no research requiring ethical approval is initiated until it has been granted.

Applicants must be clear in their applications in which country the proposed research involving humans and/or animals will take place and must fully complete the Ethical Information section for research taking place in either country. Malaysian applicants must ensure their proposed research complies with animal use guidance as advised by **Malaysian Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice**.

8. REPORTING AND PROJECT OUTPUT

Funding granted by MOHE and UKRI will be governed by the general terms and conditions of each funding organization, respectively. Both parties will carry out an international follow-up until the completion of the projects and inform their counterpart about the success or failure of the international cooperation at the end of the project.

If required, each participant should submit financial and technical reports to their national funding organisations, according to national regulations. The progress and final results of each individual contract/letter of grant will be monitored by the respective national funding organisations.

Additional specific project output required by MOHE:

i. **Human capital/Talent**
   3-year project: Projects are expected to train at least **1 PhD student** or **2 Masters student** as Graduate Research Assistant (GRA - full-time research mode) at PI's institution

ii. **Publications**
   - Researchers must publish at least **2 publications in indexed journal** (WoS/Scopus/ERA/MyCITE). One of publications must be indexed in the Web of Science (WoS).
   - Acknowledgement towards MOHE and the grant must be stated clearly in every publication.

iii. **Intellectual Property (Including Patent, Copyright, Industrial Design, layout Design of Integrated Circuit & Trademarks**)
   - All rights and governance of IP should be made in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) / Consortium Agreement between partner in Malaysia and UK
   - Filed IP must be proven with IP approval's letter

iv. **Commercialized output**
   Commercialized output from this grant shall be distributed according to the agreement of all parties in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) / Consortium Agreement.

9. CONTACTS AND GUIDANCE

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your Research Management Centre (RMC) in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

Any enquiries related to this call should be directed to:

UKRI MRC – for general enquiries on the funding opportunity or queries related UK eligibility or application process

Email: international@mrc.ukri.org

MOHE – for queries related to the application process on the Malaysian side

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