



SBRI Healthcare: NHS England competition for development contracts

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does an SBRI competition work?

SBRI enables government departments to connect with technology organisations, finding innovative solutions to specific public sector challenges and needs. It aims to use the power of government procurement to accelerate technology development, supporting projects through the stages of feasibility and prototyping which are typically hard to fund. SBRI offers an excellent opportunity for businesses, especially early-stage companies, to develop and demonstrate technology, supported by an intelligent lead customer.

SBRI is a simple structured process. Typically, competitions are structured in two phases.

Phase 1 proposals concentrate on that research and development which will significantly contribute to proving the scientific, technical and commercial feasibility of the proposed project. Phase 1 projects are eligible to apply for Phase 2, however the number of proposals funded depends on merit and is subject to budget availability. The principal research and development effort takes place in Phase 2, which aims to produce a well-defined prototype. At the end of Phase 2 it is intended that what has been developed will be manufactured and marketed as a way of fulfilling requirements.

Is my business eligible to submit an application to an SBRI competition?

Any organisation can submit an application, although it is expected that opportunities presented by SBRI will be particularly attractive for SMEs. Organisations other than industry are expected to present a strong and robust plan for commercialisation. SBRI is aimed at organisations working on the development of an innovative process, material, device, product or service. Successful applications will be those whose technology best addresses the specific needs identified, with the potential to make a measurable improvement to currently available products, processes materials, devices or services. Development contracts will be awarded only to individual organisations. However, organisations may also wish to demonstrate that successful collaboration will enhance their overall development. Work may be subcontracted but this is the responsibility of the main contractor.

I am a pre-startup company, may I apply?

Yes, but contracts must be awarded to legal entities.

I am based at a university, may I apply?

Universities may apply, however they must demonstrate a route to market, i.e. the application must include a plan to commercialise the results. It is unlikely that a university will be able to demonstrate the appropriate level of commercialisation to be successful beyond Phase 1, therefore the application should explain how the product will be developed by a commercial organisation.

As a university should I use Full Economic Cost (FEC)?

No. Costs should be calculated to reflect fair market value.

My company is a registered charity, can I apply?

Yes, registered charities are equally eligible to enter SBRI competitions via their trading company limited by guarantee. All organisations must demonstrate a route to market.

Do I need to have a clinical partner and do they need to be identified prior to Phase 1 submission?

It is strongly advised that you do. The most successful applicants demonstrate an existing relationship with a named clinician or similar expert at the time of application. Ideally this will be a named NHS member of staff with whom you have had at least initial discussions about the feasibility of your project.

Do I need to partner with an AHSN to be eligible to apply?

It is not an eligibility criterion to partner with an AHSN, however, it is strongly encouraged that you do. The AHSNs are uniquely positioned to support the development of health innovation and, by partnering with them, you can tap into their knowledge, expertise and networks to support the spread and adoption of your technology. Any organisation based in the UK (including Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) can access the AHSN.

To find out more information on the AHSNs and their contact details, you can visit their website [here](#).

What is the minimum entry point for a Phase 1 award and what activities are fundable under a Phase 1 award?

Phase 1 awards enable the establishment of the technical merit, feasibility and commercial potential of a proposed technology. Although, strictly speaking, demonstrated proof of concept is not required, the most competitive proposals are those with some data to support the case for further development and illustrate technical feasibility.

Project costs can include:

- Labour
- Materials
- Capital equipment
- Subcontractor
- Travel & subsistence
- Indirect costs

At the end of Phase 1, projects are expected to have established the technical merit, feasibility, and commercial potential of the proposed technology. Example of exit points include:

- Feasibility technical study

- Market validation
- Business plan developed
- Clinical partners identified
- Evidence generation plan for adoption
- Development of PPIE strategy
- Health inequalities impact assessment

Is there a specific list of problems that can be solved as part of this competition?

There is a list of specific categories available in the Challenge Brief that have been prioritised to provide a focus for this competition. There are also a number of interventions in the [Delivering a Net Zero NHS report](#) that demonstrate the extent of the problems the NHS are trying to overcome along their path to net zero.

Although there is not a specific list of problems provided as part of this competition, talking with local healthcare professionals to identify and determine solutions to existing problems is highly recommended.

How do I submit my application?

All bids should be made using the SBRI Healthcare portal which can be accessed via the competition pages of the SBRI Healthcare website www.sbrihealthcare.co.uk.

You must create a login using your email address and a password, via the 'Apply Now' link on the competition page.

Please note: SBRI Healthcare now uses the Programme Management Office Research Management System (RMS).

Please note that all project partners should be invited to the application through the system via email to participate as co-applicants after which they must both confirm and approve their participation; the application cannot be submitted without doing so.

Details of the challenge and expected outcome of the projects can be found in the project documents. You are strongly advised to read all published competition documents before completing the application form.

If my application fits more than one sub-category theme, can I apply to more than one?

Applications may fit multiple sub-category themes, however, you may only select 1 category on the application portal so please select the most appropriate. The funding envelope is for the entire competition rather than specifically split between challenges or themes, so there is no advantage or disadvantage to selecting a specific sub-category theme.

What is the deadline for applications?

13:00, 05 October 2022.

How will the successful applications be chosen?

Proposals are reviewed and shortlisted by an expert panel of assessors with clinical, technical, and commercial expertise specific to the competition. The shortlist of up to 25 applications is quality assured and reviewed, and the final shortlisted organisations are invited to submit a video pitch to support their

application. Shortlisted applications and videos are then reviewed by a final assessment panel made up of senior experts from LGC Group and the Innovation Research Life Sciences Team and Greener NHS teams at NHS England, as well as independent clinical experts, and patient and public representatives. Applications are then selected by the final assessment panel to receive Phase 1 funding.

For more information on the application and assessment process, please refer to the Invitation to Tender and launch [webinar recording](#).

When will I find out if my application has been successful?

All applicants will be informed shortly after the assessments have been concluded. Applicants are expected to be notified on whether their proposals have been shortlisted in November 2022 and final outcome letters are expected to be released by the end of December 2022.

How will award payments be paid to the host organisation?

SBRI Healthcare will make the first agreed payment within 30 days of the project commencement date, subject to submission of invoice from the host organisation. Any subsequent payments will be made on an agreed schedule that may be subject to satisfactory completion of financial and progress reports by the host organisation.

All payments will be made directly to the host organisation. It will be the responsibility of the host organisation to allocate funding to any project partners and subcontractors.

What are the requirements for the supporting video pitch to be submitted for the Panel meeting?

If your application has been shortlisted, you will be required to submit a video pitch to support your application assessment at the Panel meeting. The video should be no longer than 3 minutes and in MP4 format. Please upload the video on the file sharing platform of your choice and send the video link to SBRI@lgcgroup.com.

Will patients be expected to be consulted before applications are submitted and will they be part of the assessment Panel?

We encourage applicants to have an appropriate level of engagement with patients and the public prior to applying to the Programme in the development of their technology/intervention and, if appropriate, to collect some evidence that demonstrates user acceptability, usability and validity.

We expect applicants to develop an appropriate patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) plan as part of the Phase 1 proposal and we highly encourage to involve patients and members of the public in the development of their application to ensure that the proposed approach is suitable and acceptable for patients.

There will be patient and public representatives in the assessment Panel.

Do I need to have a Phase 1 award to be eligible for Phase 2 or can I apply directly to Phase 2?

Companies must first apply and be successful in securing Phase 1 funding in order to have access to Phase 2. Applicants cannot apply to Phase 2 directly. The aim is to de-risk projects and allow organisations to deliver feasibility work to make a stronger bid for Phase 2. The current open call is to apply for Phase 1 funding and an opportunity to apply for Phase 2 will follow after 6 months for those that were successful in securing Phase 1 funding, subject to budget availability.

Who owns the Intellectual Property generated by the project?

Intellectual property rights are retained by the applicant although certain rights of usage may be applied by the funding authority including royalty-free, non-exclusive licence rights and the right to require licenses to third parties, at a fair market price.

Can I work in collaboration with other companies?

Contracts will only be awarded to individual organisations. However, applicants may identify components of the work which they wish to subcontract and may also employ specialist consultants or advisers if they believe this will increase the chances of the project being successful.

What is the best way to find project partners (commercial partners or clinical partners)?

We strongly advise that you get in touch with your AHSN to develop partnership and get advice. You can also contact your local University. Alternatively the [signposting service](#) can help you find the right partners.

Should project costs include VAT?

The maximum allowable budget of Phase 1 awards is £100,000 excluding VAT and it is required that applications list project costs exclusive of VAT. Please note that SBRI is a pre-commercial procurement process and the resulting development contract is subject to VAT and that VAT is the responsibility of the invoicing business.

Can overheads be included in project costs?

An element of overheads may be included in project costs. However, such an element must be realistic. Assessors will consider financial costs in terms of 'value for money' at the assessment stage. Projects showing costs that are considered unreasonable will be rejected on these grounds.

I am based outside of England, can I apply?

We accept applications from any country in the European Union, including associated countries for EU Research and Innovation. However, please be aware that projects must show a clear health benefit to the UK.

Can I sub-contract work outside of England or the UK?

In principle this is possible, as long as the applicants demonstrate how this will benefit UK healthcare and the economy.

I am part of a large company (i.e. not an SME). Is there a disadvantage applying as a big company or would we require an SME partner?

There is no disadvantage in applying as a big company. The key issue is to demonstrate that the right expertise is available for the support of the project (e.g. if a trial is included the involvement of a healthcare provider would be expected.)

Can we apply to Phase 1 funding for longer than 6 months duration?

No, the maximum project duration is not negotiable and cannot be extended for funded projects.

The SBRI Healthcare development agreement is with Nottingham University Hospitals, does this suggest that public engagement should take place in or that solutions should be directed towards the Nottingham area?

No, solutions can be directed towards any region in the UK. Nottingham University Hospitals only acts as a legal entity for administrative purposes on behalf of the funder and their involvement does not affect the national ambition and benefits that the SBRI Healthcare programme aims to achieve.

If a product is already on market but in need of further R&D, would that be excluded from this call?

Although there is no specific entry point for a Phase 1 award, it is important to note that Phase 1 awards should focus on the establishment of the technical merit, feasibility and commercial potential of a proposed technology. Example of exit points include:

- Feasibility technical study
- Market validation
- Business plan developed
- Clinical partners identified
- Evidence generation plan for adoption
- Development of PPIE strategy
- Health inequalities impact assessment

Can sites involved in Phase 1 be different in Phase 2?

Yes, it is possible. We suggest clarifying this point in the application by providing justification for the addition/exclusion of sites.

Is there any flexibility on the project start date?

To reduce the gap between Phase 1 and 2 awards, we require that all Phase 1 projects start and end at the same time. Projects will be expected to start in January 2023 and end in June 2023.

I am in touch with NHS Trusts and sites, would these count as clinical partners?

Yes, NHS sites can be clinical partners. Please list all clinical partners in the application by providing the name, details and role description in the appropriate section of the application – up to 10 clinical partners can be added. We do not expect a supporting letter from the organisation.

I work for an NHS Trust looking to put in a bid - are you able to give an indication of the kind of scale commercialisation plans are expected to be detailed in the proposal?

As we expect technologies we fund to be implemented and procured by the NHS, we expect applicants to demonstrate how they plan to take their technology to market. For non-commercial entities, this could be, for example, through partnership with commercial companies or setting up a spin out company. If you do not yet have a route to market planned, as part of your Phase 1 project you may carry out activities to flesh out commercialisation strategies in more detail, but it will be essential to have a strategy in place by the start of Phase 2 awards.

What extent of patient involvement are you looking for?

The level of patient involvement will depend on the project. In general, patient and public involvement should be appropriate to ensure that the product is developed and/or implemented in an appropriate manner and that their views are properly consulted and considered. Please note that public and patient involvement and engagement is one of the assessment criteria.

Is sustainable material innovation in scope for this call? For example, biomaterials for PPE or other single use items.

Yes, sustainable material innovation would be eligible for this call under the 'reducing waste in surgery and critical care' challenge category, if you can prove that the innovation is capable of reducing content of virgin or carbon intensive materials used in products and if it will have an impact specifically on critical care and surgical care pathways.

Would innovations that allow more staff to work from home, by digitising pathways and patients managed by staff, be in scope for this call?

Many clinicians need to work face-to-face and there are a number of mechanisms already in place that support working from home, as such this is not a priority area for this call. However, if your solution is novel and innovative and you can prove that it helps clinicians provide net zero care, it could potentially be in scope.

Is there an example of a product that would fit the "net zero personalised care" category well?

Under the 'net zero personalised care' category we are seeking devices and innovations that will allow patients to better manage their conditions, feel supported in doing so, and improve their health. Of course, you will also need to ensure that any approach quantifies the impact on carbon emissions and does not worsen health inequalities. An example of a technology of interest could be a new way of monitoring diabetes. For more examples of technologies of interest please refer to the [Challenge Brief](#).

How can we find out where the biggest carbon emissions come from?

For information on NHS carbon emissions please visit the following pages:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/publication/delivering-a-net-zero-national-health-service/>

Does the competition only focus on reducing waste or is there any interest in waste recycling? In addition, the Challenge Brief mentions hard and one-use plastics, but are there other waste flows of interest? For example, wastage of equipment?

There is interest in waste recycling, specifically innovations that would support new approaches around reprocessing. Additionally, innovations that support suppliers to improve the recyclability of their products to minimise waste or increase the content of virgin or carbon intensive materials are also in-scope.

Yes, innovations that reduce wastage of equipment would be of interest, particularly wastage from surgical and critical care equipment. For example, innovations that would improve sterilisation and/or repairing of equipment.

Is it necessary or desirable for applicants to specifically quantify the net zero numbers and carbon footprint reduction?

It would be advisable to be as detailed as you can in your proposal. Applicants are encouraged to submit a supporting document with their application outlining their greener credentials to provide information about carbon impact assessment of the technology they are applying with and/or to explain how their company plans to align to the [NHS Sustainable Supplier Roadmap](#) and current carbon reduction targets.

This might include, a carbon impact assessment outlining how you will quantify your technology's carbon impact, the methodology you are using to gather the information, supporting data or evidence, as well as modelling and analysis.

Who should I contact if I have any further questions?

Questions on the specifics of this competition should be sent to sbri@lgcgroup.com.

Questions on the overall SBRI programme should be addressed to support@innovateuk.gov.uk.