

# 2023 UK and South Korea biomedical and health researcher partnering awards guidance

**Call Opens:** 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Call Closes:** 7 September 2023 (UK side: 4pm UK time, Korean side: 6pm Korean time).

UK Research and Innovation and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) invite proposals to the 2023 UK and South Korea biomedical and health researcher partnering awards scheme. This initiative is aimed at strengthening links between high quality research teams in the UK and Korea.

MRC and NRF will jointly make approximately £500,000 available to fund up to five Partnering Awards through this scheme. This funding will be comprised of up to £250,000 of MRC funding in support of the UK costs, and up to 500m South Korean Won (KRW) from NRF in support of the Korean costs.

The deadline for applications is 7 September 2023 (4pm UK time, 6pm Korean time). Successful awards will be announced in October 2023.

## BACKGROUND

The MRC has a strategic commitment to encourage international partnerships to tackle important and challenging research goals, while the Korean government is committed to fostering collaboration with the UK.

## AIM

The overarching aim of the UK-Korea Partnering Awards scheme is to strengthen collaborative links by providing resources to biomedical and health researchers in the UK and Korea that will support research, and the movement of researchers, between research organisations across the two countries.

Applications must demonstrate the ability to progress collaborative research activities, as well as enhance links, and strengthen sustainable partnerships between the UK and Korea through researcher mobility.

MRC awards will only be made available to UK applicants who are in receipt of a competitively awarded UKRI funding.

The awards will be made with the specific aim of:

- Supporting the mobility and exchange of researchers to enhance links between researchers in both countries.
- Supporting small-scale research costs and further developing collaborative research.
- Promoting access to facilities.
- Strengthening the strategic relationship between the UK and Korea.

## SCOPE

The UK-Korea Partnering scheme is not restrictive in terms of the scientific focus of applications, provided they sit within the MRC and NRF's remits of Biomedical and Health research. Interdisciplinary proposals and/or proposals that build on the national research strengths of the two countries are encouraged.

The funders will support one-year awards. The programme of activities is not prescribed, but should be developed in collaboration and address the specific needs of the partners.

## FUNDING

MRC will make individual awards up to £50,000. NRF will make individual awards up to 100m KRW. Therefore, for joint applications, a total of £50,000 and 100m KRW can be applied for.

For UK based partners traveling to Korea, MRC funding is available to support the following costs for one or more UK investigators:

- Travel
- Accommodation
- Subsistence
- Visa fees
- Visits/access to facilities, including bench fees where necessary.
- Consumables and other research costs (that are directly associated with the period of the researcher exchange).

On the UK side, these awards may not be used to fund:

- Salary costs
- Items of equipment
- Indirect and Estate costs
- Conference attendance fees

For Korea based partners, NRF will support costs guided by the National Research and Development Innovation act. For more information on Korean eligible costs, please see the [NRF website](#).

Where possible, applicants are encouraged to seek further sources of funding, providing details of this in their application. This could be directly from the applicant's institution or department, and/or an in-kind contribution.

MRC will pay the lead UK research organisation in arrears (at the end of the award). NRF will pay the successful Korean research organisation after the announcement of the outcome of the assessment process (at the beginning of the award).

## ELIGIBILITY

The funders will accept the submission of joint applications between UK and Korean research partners. Applications must entail a jointly developed proposal submitted to both the MRC by the UK Principal Investigator, and NRF by the Korean Principle Investigator.

Submissions to the MRC must be written in English and submissions to NRF must be written in Korean and English.

Applications must be made by a UK Principal Investigator who is eligible for MRC funding, and a Korean Principle Investigator who is eligible for NRF funding. However, there is no requirement for the Principal Investigator to directly participate in researcher exchange; for example, it may be a post-doctoral researcher employed on the Principal Investigator's grant who will spend an extended period of time working in the partner's laboratory. All researcher exchange and other partnering plans must be clearly described and justified in the application form.

UK Principal Investigator's and/or Co-Investigator's must be in receipt of an active UKRI grant that was awarded through a competitive, peer-reviewed process (for example an MRC Research Grant, Programme Grant or Fellowship). It is not a requirement that the Korean partners are directly involved (as co-investigators) on these active grant(s), but the proposed partnership work to be delivered under this UK-Korea Partnering scheme should complement/build on the competitively awarded active UKRI grant(s).

The UK applicant should have a contract of employment with the research organisation for the duration of the partnering award or assurance from the eligible organisation that, if the application is successful, a pre-existing contract of employment, will be extended beyond the end date of the grant.

Researchers who have previously been awarded an MRC-KHIDI or MRC-NRF Partnering Award are permitted to apply to this scheme, though please note these awards would not qualify as competitively awarded peer reviewed grants.

For further details on eligibility, please see the [UKRI website](#), as well as the [MRC guidance for applicants](#). Full details of eligibility for NRF funding can be found in the guidance for applicants on the [NRF website](#) and [IRIS website](#).



## APPLICATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### Timetable

Call opens: **11 July 2023**

Closing date for proposals: **7 September 2023 (UK side: 4pm UK time; Korean side: 6pm Korea time)**

Assessment of proposals: **September 2023**

Grant awarded: **Mid October 2023**

Expected project start: **Late October 2023**

Grant duration: **1 year**

### Assessment Criteria

On the Korean side, NRF will conduct an external peer review process.

On the UK side, MRC will conduct an internal assessment of applications received. The funding currently held by researchers will be used as evidence in the decision-making process. Internal assessment of these proposals allows Partnering Scheme applications to be processed swiftly and in proportion to the size of the awards.

All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The value added to the existing collaboration.
- The scientific excellence and feasibility of proposed activities.
- The benefits and future joint research likely to accrue from the collaboration.
- The potential sustainability of the collaboration.
- The uniqueness of the opportunity and expertise of both partners.
- The career development opportunities presented through the exchange of researchers.

### Application Process

UK applicants should provide the following:

- UK and South Korea partnering awards proforma
- Case for Support (3 pages)
- Gantt Chart (1 page)
- CVs (UK and Korea Principal Investigator's only – 2 pages per Principle Investigator)

For UK documentation guidance please see [Annex 1](#).

All documentation must be merged (in the above listed order) and submitted as a single PDF to the MRC. Applications from the UK side must be sent to the MRC at: [international@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:international@mrc.ukri.org)



Korean applicants should submit both the UK documentation above, as well as additional NRF required documents, using the [Integrated R&D Information System](#).

For more information on the required NRF documents, please see the call announcement on the [NRF](#) and [IRIS website](#).

## Initiation

Successful UK applicants will be sent a standard MRC award letter and will be required to accept this award before they start to spend. The MRC will reimburse the lead research organisation in arrears by invoice.

Successful Korea applicants should consult the [NRF](#) and [IRIS website](#) for award initiation guidance.

## Transfer

Should the award holder transfer to another eligible institution, the transfer of their partnering award will be subject to MRC, NRF and host institute approval.

## Termination

If a partnering award is terminated early, MRC and NRF reserve the right to refuse additional expenditure related to the award.

## How UKRI will use your personal data

You should note that the information you submit to MRC as part of your application may be shared with overseas partners at NRF to facilitate the processing of applications.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicant data may be used to support UKRI business functions, including the monitoring and evaluation of this programme. This may include sharing data, including contact information, with external contractors where required.

To meet UKRI's obligations for public accountability, details of awards, including outcomes data collected through monitoring processes (for example, Researchfish) may be made available on the UKRI websites, and shared with the UK Department for Science Innovation and Technology to support the monitoring and evaluation of UKRI programmes. Sensitive personal data, for example diversity characteristics, will only be shared in an anonymised or aggregated format.

Your personal data will be handled in line with UK data protection legislation and managed securely. If you would like to know more, including how to exercise your rights, please see our [privacy notice](#).

If you have any questions about how your data will be used please contact [international@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:international@mrc.ukri.org)

In addition, you can ask us to remove your information from our records at any time. If you want your information removed, please email [international@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:international@mrc.ukri.org) to tell us.

## Reporting Requirements

All MRC Grant Holders will be required to use ResearchFish (<https://www.researchfish.com>) to record key findings and specific outputs from their grants as per standard UKRI terms and conditions.

Grant Holders must report outcomes on a regular basis for all current grants and UKRI will monitor submissions to ensure that acceptable levels of information are being provided into Researchfish.

For more information on reporting your project outcomes please see the [UKRI website](#).

MRC, and NRF may also require further information from the grant holders as part of the evaluation process for this scheme. Grant holders will be expected to assist with these requests.

## Contacts

Eligibility and administrative queries about this scheme should be addressed to:

**UK Enquiries: Tristan Fancourt**  
Email: [international@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:international@mrc.ukri.org)

**Korea Enquiries: Seonghui Seo**  
Email: [seonghui@nrf.re.kr](mailto:seonghui@nrf.re.kr)

Please Include 'UK-Korea Partnering Awards 2023' in the subject line.

We aim to respond within [5] working days.

## Annex 1: UK DOCUMENTATION GUIDANCE

### UK and South Korea partnering awards proforma

Please complete the UK and South Korea partnering awards proforma. Please see the 'budget' section of the Proforma for information about the UK cost model and reimbursement rates for this call.

### Case for Support

The case for support should be a maximum of 3 sides of A4. Text must be single spaced Arial, font size 11, and margins must not be less than 2cm. It must contain the following sections:

- Main objectives.
- Summary of current links between UK and Korean applicants.
- Details of the research and exchange activities to be carried out.
- Statement of added value: indicate the benefit of the proposed collaboration to UK and Korean science and in particular the relevance to your current research projects.
- Applications must demonstrate how this award will facilitate longer-term collaborations between the UK and Korean applicants.

### Gantt Chart

A Gantt chart or diagrammatic action plan should be provided in the application form. Please outline the timelines for each of the activities to be carried out. Maximum 1 side of A4

### CVs

A CV is required for both the Korean and UK Principal Investigators (maximum 2 pages).