

# Applying to the 10<sup>th</sup> GACD Funding Call - Strengthening health Systems: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## GACD funding model

### What is the GACD?

The Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) is a network of public funding agencies from all over the world. They work together to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), particularly in low- and middle-income countries and in disadvantaged communities in high-income countries, by supporting sustainable implementation research.

### How do the GACD's member funding agencies work together to fund research?

These funding agencies collaborate by:

- Agreeing a common call theme and text
- Using a common application platform (except EU Commission and NIH)
- Selecting a shared group of international peer reviewers (except EU Commission and NIH)
- Jointly funding the same proposal
- Sustaining the GACD Research Network, a group of researchers and their team members who have received GACD grants.

### Does the application process differ depending on which funding agency I decide to apply to?

There are differences in requirements around target populations, budget, maximum project length, eligibility, and other criteria. [GACD funding agencies participating in the joint process](#) use [a common application form](#).

Requirements of individual funding agencies for the joint call are available in the [agency specific information on the call webpage](#).

### How much money is available for funding?

The GACD funding agencies do not pool their budgets. Each funding agency has its own budget and expectations around how many projects it will fund- this is can be found in the [agency specific information on the call webpage](#).

### How does the peer review process work?

The GACD run a joint review process with other funders taking part in the call. This will be a two-stage process, as follows:

- Applicants will submit a short first stage proposal (page limit of four pages for the proposal, not including additional documents such as CVs, budget forms etc)
- First stage proposals will be peer reviewed and scored by an independent panel.

- The Call Steering group will decide which applications will be invited to submit a second-stage proposal, based on the recommendations of the peer review panel.
- Applicants invited to submit a second stage proposal will have the opportunity to make changes to their application, in response to peer review feedback.
- Second stage proposals will be peer reviewed and scored by an independent panel and a ranking list developed for each funder.
- At the joint peer review meeting, each application will be assessed independently using the scoring criteria provided in the Call Text. Applications will then be ranked in agency-specific lists. Applicants to one funding agency will not be compared to applicants to other funding agencies. The GACD staff provides these ranked lists to the funding agencies to inform their award decisions.
- The funding agencies maintain independence in their decision making about which awards are ultimately funded. There is no score cut-off above or below which projects are funded.
- This joint peer review meeting is scheduled for the December 2025.
- [Peer review criteria can be found on the application guidance webpage.](#)

### **Who will administer and finance my award?**

If your application is successful, the funding agency to which you have applied will administer and finance your award.

### **When will I find out if my application is successful?**

Different funding agencies have substantially different timelines for formalising awards after the peer review meeting. Please check the relevant funding agency webpage for more information.

### **Who will contact me to let me know if my application is successful?**

The funding agency to which you submitted your application will inform you of the outcome of your application. The GACD staff team will not communicate awards decisions.

## **Parallel calls**

### **How do the parallel calls work?**

The US NIH and EU Horizon use the same GACD call text to run their own separate calls. They accept applications, review proposals and award funding through their own separate systems, independent from the GACD joint process.

### **What is a 'horizon associated partner'?**

A 'horizon associated partner' is a partner from a country associated with Horizon Europe. Information about the countries associated to Horizon Europe can be found here: [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/europe-world/international-cooperation/association-horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/europe-world/international-cooperation/association-horizon-europe_en)

### **Can Indian partners apply to Horizon Europe?**

Most topics in Horizon Europe are open for cooperation with India and certain topics target or encourage the participation of Indian entities. However, Indian participants are not automatically eligible for funding\* by Horizon Europe and have to bring their own funding to the projects.

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## Eligibility and project team requirements

### **How can I determine whether I am eligible to apply?**

The funding agency/ies you can apply to will depend on your geographic residency and whether the institution where you work meets the eligibility requirements for that agency. Details about each funding agency's eligibility requirements can be found in the [agency-specific information on the call webpage](#).

In general, researchers from high-income countries will be limited to applying to the funding agency in their country or state where their affiliated research institution is based.

The high-income country-based GACD funding agencies participating in this call can provide salary support to research team members based in *most* low- and middle-income countries ([Please refer to the World Bank's designation of HIC and LMIC countries](#)). Individual funding agencies may have some geographic restrictions; please see their agency-specific information document on the [call webpage](#). Some of these funding agencies will allow applicants to apply as Principal investigators, while others require low- and middle-income country team members to join the team as co-Investigators.

To confirm eligibility, you can contact the funding agency's contact person, available in their '[agency-specific information](#)' document [the call webpage](#).

### **When I apply to the GACD, do I need to choose which funding agency will consider my application, or will the GACD assign me to the most appropriate funding agency?**

You must select one or more funding agencies. There are substantial differences in eligibility requirements between funding agencies, and applicants must ensure that they meet these criteria for the funding agency or agencies that they apply to.

### **Can non-researchers apply for this funding call?**

In nearly all cases, the Principal Investigator must be a researcher. However, the project team will ideally include a multidisciplinary team comprising of researchers and non-researcher stakeholders, such as NGO leaders, patient advocates, health care professionals, Ministry of Health officials, *etc.* Both researchers and non-researchers may consider submitting your request on the [GACD find a collaborator listing](#) to help identify potential collaborators.

### **Is it a requirement that I collaborate with researchers from different countries?**

No, applications can be for research within one country, however, there are specific requirements associated with this- [please check the agency specific information on the call webpage](#).

### **Can an early-career investigator apply as a Principal Investigator?**

Yes. The GACD do not restrict applicants based on seniority level. However, applicants should provide evidence that the Principal Investigator has the experience necessary to lead the proposed project, given its complexity and geographical scale. Early career researchers should also be included among the members of the project team to help facilitate research capacity building.

### **Is it a requirement that the Principal Investigator be an *implementation science* researcher?**

No. However, it is expected that an individual with implementation research expertise be a member of the project team.

**How can someone with implementation research expertise be identified, and how does the GACD define ‘expert?’**

The GACD has created a listing system to help applicants find collaborators. Please consider posting to the [GACD find a collaborator listing](#), and letting the community know that you are seeking an implementation research expert. The GACD does not provide formal criteria for establishing whether someone might be considered an expert. Applicants can justify why someone might be considered an expert in implementation research using evidence of previous research experience, peer-reviewed publications, experience serving on review committees, teaching, and/or any other relevant experience.

**Is there a requirement that a certain percentage of the project team be from high-income countries versus low- and middle-income countries, or Indigenous versus non-Indigenous groups?**

No. However, there must be evidence of equitable partnership, as [described in the proposal review criteria](#).

**Can I submit the same or similar applications to different funding agencies?**

No, this is not permitted. However, you may be able to apply for one application to be jointly funded (*i.e.*, for the costs to be shared) by different funding agencies participating in the joint call.

**Can one person be a team member on multiple applications?**

Yes. However, individuals can only be listed as a Principal Investigator (CIA) on one application submitted to any of the GACD funding agencies in the joint call. There is no limit to the number of proposals on which a Principal Investigator on one project, or anyone else on the project team, can appear as a co-Investigator or other collaborator.

**Can an independent researcher apply or does the applicant need to be affiliated with an institution?**

Applicants must be affiliated with an institution, though this does not necessarily need to be an academic institution. Participating funding agencies have different criteria for qualifying institutions, so please check the [agency specific information available on the call webpage](#).

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**Project scope**

**Can I include a trial to test the effectiveness of the intervention that our team has adapted to a new cultural and geographical context before launching the implementation research component of the project?**

Yes. A limited period of testing the effectiveness of an intervention that your team has adapted for local implementation is usually appropriate. However, the majority of the project time and budget should be dedicated to conducting implementation research in studies that use hybrid designs. We do not limit applicants to any particular trial design for testing effectiveness of the intervention; however, a *validated* implementation research framework must underpin the proposed trial/intervention, and we encourage the use of mixed methods.

**I am planning to conduct my project in multiple countries. Do I need to assess the same evidence-based intervention in each country?**

Typically, multi-country projects focus on the same intervention and assess the generalisability of the evidence generated through implementation research. The project team will need to adapt this intervention to ensure its appropriateness in the different cultural and geographic contexts in which the project is undertaken. It may be possible to explore different interventions in different countries, but it is recommended that you contact the funding agency that you are applying to beforehand to confirm that they approve of your plan.

### **How are disadvantaged populations in high-income countries defined?**

Not all funding agencies will support research in populations in high-income countries. Some agencies limit disadvantaged populations to Indigenous communities. Others allow applicants to justify why a particular population might be considered disadvantaged. This information will be available in each funding agency's downloadable 'Agency-specific information' document in the boxes on the call webpage.

### **Is it critical to focus on ONE main NCD?**

No applications can focus on one or more NCDs or NCD risk factors- applications can focus on prevention of NCDs, tackling risk factors and diagnosis or management of NCDs. There is no exhaustive list of NCDs, however, [we have information about many of the NCDs that we cover on our website](#).

### **What qualifies as an evidence-based intervention?**

The research team need to justify the use of a specific intervention according to what they consider to be appropriate evidence for its effectiveness. This does not need to be an RCT and could be based on case studies for example.

### **Can agencies fund projects outside of the own country?**

In this call, only NHMRC is able to fund researchers based outside of Australia.

### **Does the research proposal have to be strictly implementation science related or can it be something complementary to implementation science such as the comparative risk assessment studies or modelling studies (on attributable burden)**

Applications to this call must focus on implementation research.

### **Is it within remit to fund hybrid implementation trials?**

Yes in GACD calls hybrid effectiveness/implementation trials are acceptable these need to be appropriately powered and designed.

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## **Application process**

### **Can I make changes to the project as presented in the first stage proposal in my second stage application?**

You cannot change the Principal Investigators, or the major project aims without first checking with your funding agency. However, you can make other changes, including, but not limited to, changing other project team members or editing research methods, though the methods must still demonstrate implementation science methodology.

### **Where can I find the templates for the materials I must submit as part of my application?**

For the joint process, funding agencies you can access the [application templates on the call webpage](#).

### **Can I submit the same or similar applications to different funding agencies?**

No, this is not permitted. However, you may be able to apply for one application to be jointly funded (*i.e.*, for the costs to be shared) by different funding agencies participating in the joint call.

### **I am working on a project that focuses on digital health. Is it a requirement to submit the [mERA checklist](#)?**

Yes, this is a requirement. The checklist should be uploaded as a part of your proposal form.

### **If I am submitting a full application through the GACD portal, do I also need to submit a proposal on the**

### **website of the funding agency to which I am applying?**

All applications to agencies participating in the joint call must submit using the common application portal.

### **Is the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria a requirement?**

The NHMRC IREC form is intended only for those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia.

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## **Joint funding**

### **What is joint funding?**

Joint funding is where two or more GACD funding agencies jointly fund the same application.

### **What are the benefits of applying for joint funding?**

The major opportunities that joint funding presents are that applicants:

- can form multinational project teams and request salary support for investigators who would not otherwise be able to collaborate;
- can request certain other expenses for which they would not be eligible if applying to one funding agency;
- can potentially request a larger budget than if applying to just one funding agency.

Joint funding offers an opportunity for investigators from different high-income countries to collaborate. Most high-income country-based funding agencies will not typically fund costs incurred in high-income countries outside of the country where they are based.

In some cases, applying for joint funding may facilitate more equitable partnerships between high-income country and low- and middle-income country researchers on the same project team. Some high-income country funding agencies will only fund research institutions within their respective countries and require the Principal Investigator to be a resident of that country. Joint funding between a high-income country funding agency and a low- and middle-income funding agency, would allow teams to include both high- and low- and middle-income country co-Principal Investigators, and would promote more control of spending in the low- and middle-income country.

Finally, most GACD funding agencies are keen to prioritise jointly funded applications because joint funding enables these agencies to fund more applications overall (through cost sharing) and promotes greater international collaboration. If a funding agency has indicated that they will prioritise jointly funded applications, their policy for prioritising such applications will be captured in that agency's ['agency-specific information summary' document on the call webpage](#).

Please note that SAMRC require application to request joint funding from NHMRC (applicants can request funding for the South African partners from NHMRC in addition to the funding provided by SAMRC).

### **What are the disadvantages of applying for joint funding?**

In the joint process, [all applications are reviewed against the same criteria](#) by a common review panel. A score is assigned to each application. Applications are then ranked in groups depending on the funding agency applied to. There is no GACD-wide ranking of applications. Funding agencies will use these rankings to determine which applications are funded, the number of which will depend on available budget.

When you apply for joint funding, your application will need to be among the top scoring applications across each funding agency that you apply to. This means that there is potential for your application to be competitive for an award at one agency, but not at the other, and therefore not be funded. However, in keeping with their policy to encourage jointly funded proposals, were this to occur, some funding agencies will look for ways to independently fund your application. In fact, applications for joint funding typically have a higher funding rate than applications to the single agencies.

**Can I apply for joint funding from more than two GACD funding agencies?**

Yes, this is permitted.

**Can I submit my application for consideration for joint funding, as well as a similar application with a slightly modified budget and project team to a single funding agency?**

No, this is not permitted.

**Is applying for joint funding ever required?**

Yes, joint funding is required if you apply to SAMRC, HSRI and ICMR.

**Are there any funding agencies that will not fund with other funding agencies?**

Joint funding can only be requested from agencies taking part in the joint process. There is no mechanism for joint funding for applications to the EU Horizon call or the US NIH.

**Can my application be considered for joint funding even if I do not indicate that I am interested in joint funding at the time that I submit my application?**

Yes. If your project team meets the eligibility, scope, budgetary, and geographical requirements of two or more GACD funding agencies, you *may* be considered for joint funding following the joint peer review meeting, even if you have only applied to one GACD funding agency.

**If I am interested in applying for joint funding, how should I prepare my application?**

If you have any questions about joint funding, please contact [funding@gacd.org](mailto:funding@gacd.org). You will only need to submit one application when applying for joint funding through the GACD portal (though some agencies may ask that you re-submit this application on their individual platforms).

**If your question has not been answered in this document, please contact [funding@gacd.org](mailto:funding@gacd.org), or the relevant funding agency representative listed in the 'agency-specific information' document on the call webpage.**