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## Applying to a GACD Funding Call: 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 (Joint Process; except EU Commission and NIH)
- Selecting a shared group of international peer reviewers (Joint Process; except EU Commission and NIH)
- Jointly funding the same proposal (Joint Process)
- 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 can be found in the agency specific information on the call webpage.

#### How does the peer review process work?

The GACD runs a joint review process. This is now a two-stage process, as follows:

- Applicants submit a short stage 1 application (page limit of four A4 pages for the project description, not counting additional documents such as CVs, budget form, annexes etc.)
- Stage 1 proposals are checked for eligibility by GACD and funding agencies participating in the joint funding process. Eligible applications are peer reviewed and scored by an independent panel.
- The Call Steering group decides which applications will be invited to submit a Stage 2 proposal, based on the recommendations of the peer reviewers and a triage panel.
- Applicants invited to submit a Stage 2 proposal will have the opportunity to make changes to their application, in response to peer review feedback. The Stage 2 project description is more detailed and can be the maximum of ten A4 pages not counting annexes, CVs etc.

- Stage 2 proposals will be peer reviewed and scored by an independent panel.
- At the joint peer review meeting, each application will be assessed independently using the [scoring criteria](#) provided and a ranking list developed for each funder. The GACD staff will provide 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.
- [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/ies 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.

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## **Parallel Process**

### **How does the parallel process work?**

The US NIH and EU Horizon use the same GACD call text to run their own separate process. 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 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 a 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 or strategic preferences; 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 should contact the funding agency's contact shown in their agency-specific information document on 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 their funding agencies criteria.

**Can non-researchers apply for a 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 does not restrict applicants based on seniority level. However, applications should provide evidence that the Principal Investigator has the experience necessary to lead the proposed project, given its complexity and geographical scale or demonstrate that sufficient mentorship and support will be provided. 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. 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 process.

**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 their webpages.

### **Can recipients of CIHR funding use the funds to support foreign researcher(s) that are part of their team?**

The [CIHR Nominated Principal Applicant](#) may transfer funds to team members (i.e., researchers, trainees, knowledge-users, etc.) based outside of Canada subject to approval from the Canadian [Institution Paid](#). The Primary Institution has principal responsibility for the use and monitoring of funds that are transferred to a Non-eligible Secondary Institution. Consult the [Tri-Agency \(CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC\) Guide on Financial Administration](#) for information on the [transfer of funds](#).

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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 on the call webpage.

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

The 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?**

Some agencies can fund projects outside of their country, such as CIHR, EC, HSRI, NIH or NHMRC. However, you need to always check for the country/ies and research organisations eligibility requirements for each funder specifically either on their website or reaching out to the contact specified on the agency specific information on the call webpage.

**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?**

The hybrid effectiveness/implementation trials are acceptable in GACD calls. 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, funding agency/ies 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?**

The templates and other materials can be found on a corresponding call's 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 is included in an application template and should be filled in as a part of your application 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 be submitted using the GACD application portal. CIHR also requires to upload a PDF file of the full Stage 1 application as submitted via GACD portal to the [ResearchNet](#).

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

The NHMRC IREC form is required 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-specific information document on the call webpage.

### **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 or 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?**

You should indicate your intention to apply for joint funding at the Stage 1 and clearly list all funding agencies from which you are seeking support. Requests for joint funding may influence evaluation outcomes, as participating funding agencies may give additional strategic consideration to applications seeking joint support.

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

Please review agency-specific information from the agencies you will request funding. You will only need to submit one application when applying for joint funding through the GACD portal (though some agencies may ask that, in addition, you upload pdf of this application on their individual platforms).

**If your question has not been answered in this document and you could not find an answer in an agency-specific information file, 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.**