

## MRC-AMED INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESEARCH COLLABORATION

**Call Opens: 19th June 2019**  
**Call Closes: 4th September 2019**

The Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (**AMED**) and the UK Medical Research Council (UKRI **MRC**) are pleased to launch a call for proposals for **UK-Japan collaborative research into infectious diseases**. This jointly funded initiative is aimed at fostering collaborative links between researchers in the UK and Japan. We invite joint application (by parallel submission) from researchers based in the UK and Japan. The deadline for applications is **4th September 2019**. Successful awards will be announced in December 2019.

### **Background**

AMED is committed to fostering collaboration between the UK and Japan. MRC has a strategic commitment to encourage international partnerships to tackle important and challenging research goals. In response to the promising potential for work between our two countries and based on the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by AMED and MRC in February 2017, this call is dedicated to strengthening collaborations between researchers in the UK and Japan with a focus on infectious disease.

### **Aim**

The overarching aim of the UK-Japan collaborative initiative in infectious diseases is to provide bi-lateral support to biomedical and health researchers in the UK and Japan that will allow them to forge lasting collaborations. This initiative aims to strengthen existing links or foster new links that add value to research taking place in both countries. This is expected to be achieved by facilitating exchange and catalysing innovative synergy amongst collaborators and is particularly aimed at those who are in the early stages of their careers. Therefore it is expected that applications will be made by eligible early career researchers or by established researchers who explicitly wish to encourage the career development of their postdoctoral researchers. It is hoped that the partnerships established through these awards will lead to the development of long-term collaborative research programmes that will be competitive for international funding.

### **Objectives**

The objective is to provide bilateral support for up to eight, catalytic, innovative collaborative partnerships between researchers from Japan and UK. These will enable important synergy between researchers with shared or complementary interests.

Specific objectives that underpin the UK-Japan research collaborative initiative in infectious disease are to promote:

- partnerships between UK and Japan investigators in fields of biomedical, health and clinical research
- the exchange of scientists, particularly early career scientists,

- knowledge or methodology exchange,
- complementary access to facilities / resources / equipment
- stronger opportunity for collaborative research and catalyse further synergy

It is expected therefore that jointly planned collaborative UK-Japan partnership project applications will be submitted. Applications from early career researchers or from established researchers who wish to encourage their postdoctoral scientists career development are particularly invited.

### **Scope**

This call aims to support early career researchers develop fruitful international collaborations in the field of **infectious diseases**. Within this broad field AMED-MRC would particularly like to encourage applications which tackle the more challenging issues of infectious diseases including i) priority viral outbreak pathogens; ii) research providing mechanistic insight into latency/persistence/resistance in infectious diseases; and iii) research exploring the host infection interface, particularly at key barrier sites eg blood-brain barrier.

Research areas of interest include:

- the pathogenesis of lethal viruses, such as the Ebola virus, Lassa virus, or tick-borne viruses
- mechanistic insight on latent and persistent infections
- exploration of host infection interface eg central nervous system infections by blood-brain barrier failure, trans-placental infections or mucosal-gut barrier
- drug resistant pathogens
- development of new treatment measures, therapeutic agents, vaccines or therapeutic strategies concerning any of the above

The use of novel strategies, computational / informatics using 'big data' and multidisciplinary approaches or advanced techniques within a project are encouraged but should be well articulated.

### **Funding**

AMED and MRC will jointly provide bi-lateral support for up to three years to intensify productive collaboration in infectious disease research between UK and Japan's leading researchers.

It is anticipated that 8 awards will be jointly supported, and the total funding available to support these 8 projects over three years will be approximately £1.2 million = 180 million JPY (£600,000 from the MRC and 90 million JPY from AMED).

Each jointly planned UK-Japan project will receive a maximum award of (£75,000 from MRC plus 11.25 million JPY from AMED in total for the three year period. *(That is £25,000 MRC plus 3.75 million JPY AMED per annum, over the three year period.)*

## GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### I. GENERAL GUIDANCE

AMED and MRC invite researchers based in Japan and UK to submit jointly planned collaborative partnership projects in the field of infectious disease. For this initiative, parallel submission of each joint UK-Japan collaborative project should be made to both the funding agencies AMED and MRC following the instructions below.

For each joint project there will be a single Japan principal investigator and a single UK principal investigator. These Co-principal investigators (**Co-PIs**) will lead the submission in their respective country to their respective agency (AMED in Japan and MRC in UK). The Co-PIs should be eligible for the receipt of their respective agency funding.

This initiative aims to support collaboration between early career researchers and it is expected that the applications will be made by eligible early career researchers or by established researchers who explicitly wish to encourage their postdoctoral researchers to make collaborative links to foster knowledge exchange and their career development.

#### **In the UK**

Submissions to MRC must list the UK-based Co-PI as the PI on the application with the Japan-based Co-PI as the first named co-applicant. Submissions should be made on line using the [JeS application system](#). Co-PIs must prepare and submit the same joint UK-Japan Case for support in English using the call specific template.

#### **In Japan**

Submissions to AMED must list the Japan-based Co-PI as the PI on the application with the UK-based Co-PI as the first named co-applicant. Submissions should be made on line using [e-Rad application system](#). Co-PIs must prepare and submit the same joint UK-Japan Case for support in English using the call specific template. **The Japan-based Co-PI has to submit the additional application form “追加応募様式” written in Japanese.**

**Co-PIs may only apply for one joint project in this Japan-UK call.**

#### **Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA)**

It will be the responsibility of the Co-PIs and their research organisations to draw up a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) suitable to administer and manage the delivery of the project activities, finances, intellectual property rights (IPR) and to avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project.

The Co-PIs should send the CRA signed by all partners to AMED and MRC. This agreement will be made available to the concerned funding organisations. The project partners are encouraged to sign this CRA before the official project start date, and to submit it **no later than six months after the official project start date.**

### **Start date and Duration**

The duration of the joint collaborative research project shall be no longer than three years [thirty-six (36) months] in total from the start date. **Awards MUST start on 1 January 2020 in FY2019/20.**

This project start date must be stated in the **Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA)**.

## **II. ELIGIBILITY**

The Co-PIs should be eligible for the receipt of their respective agency (AMED OR MRC) funding.

### **In the UK**

The UK-based Principal Investigator must be the person who will be the Co-PI for the project (and named as the first co -applicant on the Japan submission).

For UK applicants, standard UKRI eligibility criteria as described on the [UKRI website](#) will apply. Applicants from Research Organisations that are eligible to apply to the MRC, for example MRC Units and Institutes may apply to this call. Please see the standard [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#) and the Call Specific MRC Guidance for UK Applicants for further information.

### **In Japan**

The Japan-based Principal Investigator must be the person who will be the Co-PI for the project (and named as the first co -applicant on the UK submission).

The Japan-based Co-PI must be affiliated with a domestic Japanese University etc. \* <sup>1</sup>research institution and will carry out the proposed project at this institution.

The following researchers may also submit applications:

- Researchers of foreign nationality who are affiliated with a domestic Japanese University etc. research institution.
- Researchers who are able to bear overall responsibility for an R&D project throughout the entire project period.

For further details, please refer to “**VII REPORTING**” and “**補足公募要領 (Supplemental guidelines: written in Japanese and English for Japan-based co-applicants)**”.

## **III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

In this joint call, AMED and MRC will fund **up to eight collaborative research proposals** with bi-lateral support, where each jointly planned UK Japan project will receive a maximum award of

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<sup>1</sup> \*: The term “University etc.” refers to educational corporations such as national, public and private university corporations; public research organizations such as national and public testing and research bodies, independent administrative agencies, and national R&D corporations; and public organizations such as benevolent corporations

£75,000 from MRC plus 11.25 million JPY from AMED in total for the three year period. (*That is £25,000 from MRC plus 3.75 million JPY from AMED per annum, over the three year period.*)

AMED will provide their support to the Japan based Co- PI at their research organisation, and MRC will support researchers based in the UK. MRC and AMED expect the costs on each side to accurately reflect the activities proposed in the application and that the collaborative research effort on both sides should be comparable. Reciprocated funding for exchanged staff (to cover facilities and consumables) is anticipated.

It is anticipated that the requested costs will reflect the nature of the intended activities to fit the objectives of this call:

- partnerships between UK and Japan investigators in fields of biomedical, health and clinical research
- the exchange of scientists, particularly early career scientists
- knowledge or methodology exchange
- complementary access to facilities / resources / equipment
- stronger opportunity for collaborative research and catalyse further synergy

**In Japan (Support by AMED)**

AMED will provide 3.75 million yen per annum, over the three year period as its contribution to bilateral support for each awarded project.

**Contract between Japan-based Co-PI and AMED**

Support will be implemented in accordance with a contract for commissioned research which shall be entered into between AMED and the Japan-based co-PI’s Institution. The contract for commissioned research will be signed each fiscal year over the collaborative research period. Since the contract is agreed on condition that all administrative procedures related to the project in question shall be handled within the institution, the PI should consult with the department in charge at his/her institution.

Budget for Collaborative Research Projects: the total budget for each project proposed by Japan-based co-applicants over a full three (3)-year period (i.e. thirty-six (36) months) should not exceed 11.25 million yen in principle including indirect cost. The planned budget for research projects may vary each fiscal year, depending on the planned activities specific to each project. Funding for Japan-based applicants are allowable for:

	<b>Main ítem</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Direct costs</b>	Costs of goods (equipment/supplies)	Research facilities/equipment/prototypes, software (ready-made goods), book purchasing costs, purchasing costs for reagents/materials/consumables for use in research
	Travel costs	Travel costs of R&D participants, travel costs for invited participants such as external experts
	Personnel costs/ services costs	Personnel costs: personnel costs for researchers, etc., employed to conduct the relevant contracted R&D

		Service costs: expenditure for services such as lecture requests, guidance/advice, test subjects, interpreters/translators, and unskilled labor.
	Other	Costs for implementing the relevant contracted R&D other than the above. Examples: R&D results publication costs (academic paper contribution costs, academic paper offprint costs, website production costs, etc.), conference costs, equipment leasing costs, Equipment repair costs, printing costs, subcontract costs, testing costs, amount equivalent to consumption tax related to untaxed transactions, etc.
<b>Indirect costs<sup>2</sup></b>	Expenditure used by research institutes and paid by AMED as necessary costs for managing the research institutes during implementation of the relevant R&D, paid at a fixed percentage of direct costs (within 30%) as an allowance.	

<sup>1</sup>Link from: <https://www.amed.go.jp/keiri/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Implemented when AMED concludes a contracted R&D agreement with a national university corporation, inter-university research institute corporation, independent administrative corporation, special corporation, special private corporation, general incorporated association, general incorporated foundation, public interest incorporated association, public interest incorporated foundation or private university, etc., and does not apply in the case that the researcher is affiliated with a national facility or other institution (excluding the National Institute for Educational Policy Research). The fixed percentage will not exceed 30%. With regard to Subsidiary Institutions (excluding national facilities or other institutions) also, indirect costs are allocated in accordance with direct costs.

**In the UK (Support by MRC)**

The total funding provided by MRC for each project proposed by UK-based Co-PI over a full three (3)-year period (i.e. thirty-six (36) months) will not exceed £75,000. This is the total provision that will be made (as 80% of the requested 100% FEC costs including any indirect costs).

Costs should be requested under the appropriate headings directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect to reflect the activities in scope. These should be justified in the appropriate section of the submission. **Please note the UK element of funding will not cover requests for capital items.**

<b>Directly Incurred cost</b>	Staff costs, small scientific equipment, research consumables, travelling expenses, accommodation charges, and other costs that can be justified as necessary to carry out the proposed activities.
<b>Directly Allocated Costs</b>	Time commitment from investigators, use of centralised resources etc Estates costs
<b>Indirect cost</b>	Indirect costs (overheads)

## IV. HOW to APPLY

For this initiative, parallel submission of each joint UK-Japan collaborative project should be made to both the funding agencies AMED and MRC following the instructions for submission below. Please follow carefully and allow sufficient time for the appropriate administrative checks within your host research organisations.

The Co-PIs from Japan and UK shall work together to write a **single case for support** and apply electronically as designated in the next section ( **V. SUBMISSION of APPLICATION**). The format of the agencies' on line application systems may differ but must be filled as similarly as possible so that a similar joint application is submitted in parallel: Japanese and UK Co-PIs shall submit to AMED and MRC, respectively.

### Joint UK JAPAN Case for support

Using the template provided a jointly agreed **Case for Support** written in English should be submitted by the Japan-based and UK Co-PIs as part of their application. Please follow the instructions in the Case for Support template and complete all sections as necessary.

For the UK applicants the Case for Support must be submitted as a PDF attachment to the Je-S application. Please see call specific MRC Guidance for UK Applicants for further information.

For Japanese applicants the Case for Support must be submitted as its PDF using e-Rad application system. Please see “補足公募要領” for further information.

## V. SUBMISSION of APPLICATION

### In Japan

In Japan, submissions will be made through the online application system, e-Rad (<http://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html>).

On the proposal form the Japan Co-PI should be listed as the principal investigator and the UK Co-PI should be listed as the first named co-applicant.

Japan-Based Co-PI should electronically submit their application forms to AMED by **20:00 (Japanese Standard Time) on 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2019.**

### **IN PARALLEL**

### In UK

In the UK, submissions will be made through the UKRI web based online [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\) System](#) . Please see the standard [Je-S Guidance](#) and the Call Specific MRC Guidance for UK Applicants.

On the proposal form the UK Co-PI should be listed as the principal investigator and the Japan Co-PI should be listed as the first named co-applicant.

The UK-based Co-PI should electronically submit the application together with the Case for Support pdf to the MRC by **16:00 (BST) on 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2019**. Please note **that clicking ‘submit document’ initially submits the proposal to the UK institution’s administration, not to the MRC.**

*Sufficient time must be allowed for the submission process between submitting your proposal and the call closing date.*

**Failure to submit a valid application to both funders will invalidate both submissions.**

## VI. EVALUATION of PROPOSALS

Evaluation of proposals within remit will be undertaken by UK and Japanese expert panels. Recommendations from the expert panels will be considered jointly by MRC and AMED who will agree the final funding allocation.

Proposals will be assessed according to key evaluation criteria using a common evaluation form. A scoring system from 1 to 10 will be used to evaluate the proposal’s performance with respect to key evaluation criteria.

### Key Evaluation Criteria:

1. Fit to joint call purpose
2. Importance, scientific/technological significance and clear benefit through collaborative activities
3. Quality and value for money of the implementation/appropriateness of the plan
4. Potential Impact
- 5.

Other factors if they become relevant may be used as criteria -for example institutional location of awards as the funders would wish to diversify their support.

### Scoring system:

Score	Category
1	Extremely Poor
2	Very Poor
3	Poor
4	Marginal
5	Fair

Score	Category
6	Good
7	Very good
8	Excellent
9	Outstanding
10	Exceptional

### Announcement of Decision:

Successful co-applicants will be notified of the final decision by AMED and MRC **by December 2019.**



## VII. REPORTING

Awarded researchers and their affiliated institutions will observe the following when carrying out the collaborative research and utilizing funds provided by AMED and MRC.

- Annual Progress Report

At the end of fiscal year, the co-PIs should promptly submit a joint progress report in English. In addition, successful applicants could be asked to present the project results during dedicated Review Seminars.

In Japan Co-PIs will need to send the annual report by email to [kokusai5931@amed.go.jp](mailto:kokusai5931@amed.go.jp), and to complete the annual report submission through e-Rad system. In UK Co-PIs will need to send the annual report by email to [MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org)

- Final Report

The Funders will request a brief final report on this collaborative activity. Joint final reports should be submitted within two (2) months after completion of the period of international collaborative research. The report should include a general summary compiled jointly by both the Japan and the UK research groups. If papers describing results of collaborative research are presented to academic journals, societies and so on, copies of such papers are to be attached to the final report.

In Japan Co-PIs will need to send the final report by email to [kokusai5931@amed.go.jp](mailto:kokusai5931@amed.go.jp), and to complete the annual report submission through e-Rad system. In UK Co-PIs will need to send the final report by email to [MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org)

It will also be necessary for each funded group to submit reports to AMED and MRC in accordance with the respective regulation.

In the UK Co-PIs will require to complete the annual ResearchFish submission.

## VIII. TIMETABLE

- **Call opens: 19th June 2019**
- **Closing date for proposals: 4th September 2019**
- **Evaluation of proposals: September-October 2019**
- **Joint funding decision: November 2019**
- **Grant awarded: December 2019**
- **Project start: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

## IX. CONTACT INFORMATION

**Japan-based co-applicants should contact the following for further information:**

Dr Yasutake Katoh  
Department of International Affairs  
Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development  
Yomiuri Shimbun Bldg. 1-7-1 Otemachi Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 100-0004  
Tel. +81(0)3-6870-2215  
Fax +81(0)3-6870-2240  
sicorp@amed.go.jp

**UK-based co-applicants should contact the following for further information:**

Ms Samia Majid  
Medical Research Council  
58 Victoria Embankment  
London EC4Y 0DS  
Tel: +44(0)20 7395 2238  
MRCAMED.II@mrc.ukri.org