

BHF-DZHK-DHF International Cardiovascular Research Partnership Awards

2023/24 Call for Research Proposals from Future Leaders in Cardiovascular Research

Following four successful rounds in 2018 (BHF and DZHK), 2019, 2021 and 2022 (BHF, DZHK and DHF) that led to joint funding for 12 collaborative projects, we are pleased to announce a fifth round of the competition. The current round, which has an application deadline of 24 May 2023, maintains the previous round's aim of supporting impactful international collaborations between mid-career investigators who are on a trajectory towards leadership in their fields of cardiovascular research.

This is a partnership research funding scheme between the British Heart Foundation (BHF), the German Centre for Cardiovascular Research (DZHK) and the Dutch Heart Foundation (DHF). Awards will fund cardiovascular research projects where the cross-national dimension enables work of greater ambition and higher potential impact than can be carried out nationally.

The fifth round of the scheme is **specifically aimed at supporting mid-career investigators** on a trajectory towards becoming future leaders in cardiovascular research, by enabling them to undertake collaborative work with other such investigators from the partner countries. The scope of the scheme covers innovative research that contributes to improved clinical diagnosis, prevention or treatment of cardiovascular disease. Partnerships that involve a multidisciplinary approach are strongly encouraged.

Up to four partnership awards are expected to be made in this round, with each funder supporting work carried out in its respective country. Each proposal must be led by at least two Principal Investigators (PIs) based in different partner countries (UK, Germany or the Netherlands). Projects may have a duration of **up to four years** and may request **a total budget of up to ≈€1,500,000, comprising a maximum of £500,000 from BHF, €500,000 from DZHK and €500,000 from DHF.**

Proposals will go through a scientific selection process under open competition, including international peer review and assessment by an International Review Panel (IRP) that will make award recommendations to the three funders. Each proposal will be evaluated on how well it fits with the scope and aims of the call, as well as on the level of innovation, feasibility, value for money and added value of the partnership.

Eligibility requirements

Owing to differences in research career structures in the three countries, the criteria used to define eligible PIs for this call are not identical for each funder. For a complete list of eligibility requirements and exclusion criteria, please consult the table at the end of this document. Note that the requirements apply only to PIs and not to co-applicants.

Important guidance

- Applications must make a strong case that the proposed international research collaboration provides significant synergistic benefit for the project and its targeted outcomes, by building on the interests and expertise of the associated PIs and supports the PIs' development. An explanation of how the award will help advance the careers of the PIs and the training of junior researchers supported by the grant, along with a justification for the collaboration and articulation of its added value, will be critical aspects of assessment by reviewers and the IRP.
- Proposed research should be hypothesis driven and focused, with costings allowed for research, including staff (e.g., postdocs, technicians or equivalent).
- PhD students will only be eligible for support within the DZHK- and DHF-funded components of any application; BHF does not fund PhD studentships under this scheme.
- Clinical trials are not eligible for support, although early clinical investigation based on a preclinical research programme may be proposed.
- There are no specific restrictions on the scientific theme, apart from the following four requirements:
 - Applications must propose work that is substantially different from that supported by any previous awards, if in the same area of research. Please view all previous awards [here](#).
 - PIs from previous awards may not reapply as PI nor receive further funding through this scheme if they apply as co-applicants or collaborators.
 - Resubmission of previous applications that were not selected for an award are allowed, provided that prior reviewers' comments are addressed in the new application and that all PIs conform to the eligibility rules. Resubmitted applications will be assessed in open competition with all other applications (further guidelines provided in the online application form).
 - Applicants from the Netherlands should ensure that when the research programme thematically aligns with consortia of the Dutch CardioVascular Alliance, active collaboration with this consortium is sought and that the projects align with the shared goal of all three funders to lower the cardiovascular disease burden significantly. For more information about the requirements for Dutch applications please visit [here](#).
- Applications must include one PI each from at least two, or all three, of the funder countries (UK, Germany, and the Netherlands). Additional co-applicants and collaborators may be included but there is no obligation to include investigators from all three countries. The total number of named applicants must not exceed three in each country (i.e., one PI and two co-applicants). Academic cardiovascular investigators in the UK and the Netherlands and investigators in Germany with a DZHK status are eligible to apply. While applications may

include participation of commercial partners, each PI must be affiliated with an academic institution.

- Work involving animals or human subjects or samples will be expected to broadly conform to the research ethics and data protection standards and regulations of all countries involved, even if the work in question is only carried out in one of the countries. Official approvals or licenses are only required from the country where the work will take place, but applicants should consider relevant standards and expectations in all partner countries. Proposals may be rejected on the basis of insufficient adherence to those standards and expectations, as determined by any relevant funder.

Investigators based in the UK and the Netherlands are required to contact BHF and DHF, respectively, to discuss their eligibility as PIs before submitting an application. For DZHK-funded investigators in Germany, confirmation of eligibility with the funder is optional but recommended. Please use the following email contacts:

BHF: InternationalResearch@bhf.org.uk,

DZHK: bhfcooperation@dzhk.de

DHF: research@hartstichting.nl

To apply, one of the named PIs will complete and submit the online application form via the BHF's research Grants Management System following the on-screen instructions (a link will be provided following eligibility checks with the respective funder).

The deadline for submitting applications is Wednesday, 24 May 2023.

Assessment timeline:

24 May 2023:	Submission deadline for applications
Around 13 September 2023:	External reviews sent to applicants for rebuttal.
27 September 2023:	Submission deadline for rebuttals
November 2023:	Panel meeting
December 2023/January 2024:	Notification of funding outcome (might differ per funder)

Eligibility requirements for applications:

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Funder-specific requirements	
Principal investigators must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-15 years of research experience after completion of highest research degree (e.g., PhD).^{1, 2} Funding as lead applicant supporting own research group. A recent record of senior author publications. Their salaries fully covered by other sources for the duration of proposed project. Protected research time in their posts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous award to PI under this scheme. Significant overlap with a previously funded project (list available here). 	BHF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PI substantive post can be a personal fellowship (at BHF Intermediate or Senior level or equivalent) or a Faculty appointment (at Lecturer level or above). <i>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is mandatory.</i>
		DHF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PIs seek active collaboration with thematic DCVA consortia.³ <i>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is mandatory.</i>
		DZHK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who request their own budget must have DZHK status.⁴ <i>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is recommended.</i>

¹ BHF: Allowance will be made for career breaks (e.g., maternity/paternity leave, long-term illness, COVID-19-related personal disruptions, etc.), part-time/flexible working and clinical training. Prospective applicants who do not fit this criterion precisely may discuss their eligibility with the BHF Head Office. DZHK: Family leave and long-term illness will be taken into consideration. DHF: Allowance will be made for career breaks (e.g., maternity/paternity leave, long-term illness, etc.). Please check the eligibility criteria on our website: <https://professionals.hartstichting.nl/samenwerking-en-financiering/financiering/internationale-financiering/engelse-en-duitse-financieringspartners>

² Years of research experience will be calculated using a limit date of 1 January 2023 for BHF and DHF applicants, and date of publication of the call for DZHK applicants (1 March 2023).

³ For more information please visit <https://professionals.hartstichting.nl/samenwerking-en-financiering/financiering/internationale-financiering/engelse-en-duitse-financieringspartners>

⁴ See <https://dzhk.de/en/the-dzhk/scientists/> to check if you have a DZHK status.