**International Cardiovascular Research Partnership Awards**

2024-25 Call for Research Proposals from Future Leaders in Cardiovascular Research

**Following five successful rounds in 2018 (BHF and DZHK), 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023 (BHF, DZHK and DHF) that led to joint funding for 16 collaborative projects, we are pleased to announce a sixth round of the competition with the Lefoulon-Delalande Foundation as a new funding partner from France. The current round, which has an application deadline of 27 June 2024, maintains the previous rounds' 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) the Dutch Heart Foundation (DHF) and the Lefoulon-Delalande Foundation (LDF). Awards will fund high-quality cardiovascular research projects with the potential to create sustainable international collaborations and contribute to the establishment of the PIs as leaders in their respective fields of research.

The sixth round of the scheme maintains the two previous editions' focus on **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.

Each funder will support work carried out in its respective country, with individual projects to be co-led by at least three Principal Investigators (PIs) based in each of the countries involved (France, Germany, the Netherlands, or the United Kingdom). Projects may have a duration of **up to four years** and may request **a total budget of up to ≈€2,000,000, comprising a maximum of £500,000 from BHF, €500,000 from DHF, €500,000 from DZHK and €500,000 from LDF**. Proposals are expected to demonstrate adequate value for money, with funding amount requests to match the proposed contribution from each PI to the project.

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 four funders. In addition to fit with the scope and aims of the call and value for money, each proposal will also be evaluated on the level of innovation, potential for impact, methodological rigour, feasibility, representativeness/diversity (where applicable), benefit and added value of the partnership, applicants' skills and resources, and potential for training and career development of PIs and staff across collaborating groups.

Eligibility requirements

Owing to differences in research career structures in the four 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 DHF-, DZHK- and LDF-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 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.

- Applications that were not selected for an award in previous rounds may be resubmitted once (i.e., the same project may only be submitted two times), provided that they still fit with the scope, aims and eligibility requirements of the current call and that prior reviewers' comments are addressed in the new application. 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 existing consortia funded by the DHF, active collaboration with this consortium is sought and that the projects align with the shared goal of all four 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 three and up to four, of the funder countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). Additional co-applicants and collaborators may be included but there is no obligation to include investigators from all four 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 France, the Netherlands and the UK, as well as 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 France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK are required to contact the LDF, DZHK, DHF and BHF, respectively, to discuss their eligibility as PIs before submitting an application.** Please use the following email contacts:

BHF: InternationalResearch@bhf.org.uk,

DHF: research@hartstichting.nl

DZHK: bhfcooperation@dzhk.de

LDF: alice.carron@institutdefrance.fr

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 Thursday, 27 June 2024**

**Assessment timeline:**

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| 27 June 2024: | Submission deadline for applications |
| Around 23 September 2024: | External reviews sent to applicants for rebuttal. |
| 07 October 2024: | Submission deadline for rebuttals |
| November 2024: | Panel meeting |
| December 2024/January 2025: | Notification of funding outcome (may differ per funder) |

**Eligibility requirements for applications:**

<table>
<tr><th>Inclusion criteria</th><th>Exclusion criteria</th><th colspan="2">Funder-specific requirements</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Principal investigators musthave:<ul><li>Expertise in biomedical or non-biomedical discipline(s) as necessary to carry out the proposed work.</li><li>8-15 years of research experience after completion of highest research degree (e.g., PhD).[1, 2]</li><li>Funding as lead applicant supporting own research group.</li><li>A recent record of senior author publications.</li><li>Their salaries fully covered by other sources for the duration of proposed project.</li><li>Protected research time in their posts.</li></ul></td><td rowspan="4"><ul><li>Previous award to PI under this scheme.</li><li>Significant overlap with a previously funded project (list available here).</li></ul></td><td>BHF</td><td><ul><li>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).</li><li>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is mandatory.</li></ul></td></tr>
<tr><td>DHF</td><td><ul><li>PIs seek active collaboration with thematic DCVA consortia.[3]</li><li>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is mandatory.</li></ul></td></tr>
<tr><td>DZHK</td><td><ul><li>Applicants who request their own budget must have DZHK status.[4]</li><li>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is recommended.</li></ul></td></tr>
<tr><td>LDF</td><td><ul><li>PI substantive post can be an Inserm/CNRS appointment at ‘Directeur de recherche deuxième classe‘ level (less than four years at this level).</li><li>Pre-application confirmation of eligibility is mandatory.</li></ul></td></tr>
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[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 2024 for BHF, DHF and LDF applicants, and date of publication of the call for DZHK applicants (4 April 2024).

[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.