



NHS Cancer Programme Innovation Open Call 3

INVITATION TO TENDER

This Invitation to Tender should be read in conjunction with other documents associated with this competition. These and all associated documents can be downloaded from the [SBRI Healthcare website](#).

Summary

Applicants are invited to tender for projects under the SBRI Healthcare programme to implement innovation-enabled solutions addressing the challenge outlined in the [brief](#) available on the [competition webpage](#).

Application Process

Bids must be submitted via the online [Research Management System \(RMS\)](#), which can also be accessed by following the application link in the “Open Competitions” landing page on the [SBRI Healthcare](#) website.

Details of the challenge, eligibility criteria and expected outcomes of the projects can be found the [Challenge Brief](#). We strongly advise applicants to read the [Applicant and Portal Guidance](#) available on the [competition webpage](#) before submitting an application.

The competition is open to all organisations that can demonstrate a route to market for their solution and provide an NHS implementation/adoption strategy. The SBRI Healthcare scheme is particularly suited to small and medium-sized businesses, as the contracts are of relatively small value and operate on short timescales. Real world implementation projects are 100% funded and focused on specific identified needs, increasing the chance of exploitation. This NHS Cancer Programme Innovation Open Call is intended to facilitate the collection of evidence in real-world settings and build on the value proposition of mature products for adoption and spread. The contracts awarded will be for a maximum of 24 months and up to £4 million (**NET cost, excl. VAT**) per project.

Note: All applicants are recommended to include a set-up phase of ~4-6 months in the proposed project timeline (this is included in the total project time up to 24 months). The set-up period will enable the project team to undertake all activities needed to start the implementation of the proposed innovation. Applicants are recommended to carefully read the “Monitoring Expectations for the Awardees” on page 6 of this document to define their project plan, deliverables and timeline.

Due to the nature of the projects that will be supported, and the intended outcomes, clinical efficacy and safety must be demonstrated, and the involvement of appropriate clinical partners based in England is mandatory.

Successful applicants will be selected by an open competition process and retain the intellectual property rights generated from the project, with certain rights of use retained by the NHS.



Promising innovations may have the opportunity to bid for additional funding (for example bridge funding to continue innovation provision until the next relevant NHS procurement cycle etc.) at the end of the contract duration subject to an independent review process.

A briefing event for organisations interested in finding out more about the competition will be held on Tuesday, 06 February 2024 at 3:00 p.m. and a match making event with Cancer Alliances and Health Innovation Networks will be held on 12 March 2024 at 2 pm. Please check the website for further details.

The competition opens on 8 April 2024. Applications must be submitted *via* the online [Research Management System \(RMS\)](#). Only applications received **by 1:00pm GMT 29 May 2024** will be accepted.

Please note that we will not accept applications submitted by post or by any other means than through the online portal as described above.

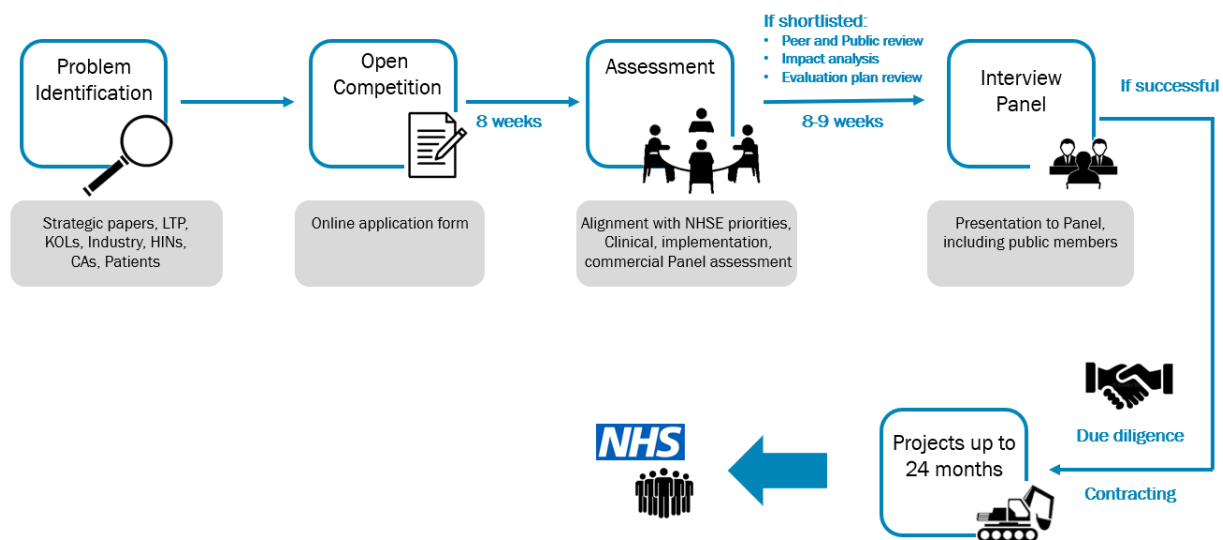
Key dates

Launch event	6 February 2024 between 3-5 pm
Match making event	12 March 2024 between 2-5 pm
Competition Open	8 April 2024
Deadline for applications	29 May 2024, 1 pm
Assessment	May/June 2024
Peer review (if shortlisted)	July/September 2024
Interview Panel(s)	2-3 October 2024
Contracts awarded	October/November 2024

Assessment process

A diagram of the process for application and assessment is shown below (Figure 1):

Figure 1: Diagram of the NHS Cancer Programme Innovation Open call



All eligible applications will be reviewed by a selected Panel of experts who will provide feedback on the applications according to the following assessment criteria:

- How well does the proposal address the challenge outlined in the brief and how significant is the impact on early cancer diagnosis? (WEIGHT 20%)
- How convincing is the evidence base to demonstrate that the proposed solution would improve earlier cancer detection and diagnosis? (WEIGHT 20%)
- Are the project plan (including independent evaluation plan), deliverables and risk mitigation strategy appropriate? (WEIGHT 15%)
- Will the solution have a competitive advantage over standard of care and existing alternative solutions, and how innovative is the proposal and are the arrangements surrounding the use and development of Intellectual Property appropriate? (WEIGHT 10%)
- Does the proposed project have appropriate commercialisation and adoption strategies, including a comprehensive sustainability plan for carbon reduction, which aligns to the new NHS net zero requirements for procurement in the UK? (WEIGHT 10%)
- Does the proposed innovation have the potential to enhance equity of access and has the project demonstrated appropriate considerations toward patient and public involvement and engagement? (WEIGHT 5%)
- Does the host organisation and project team appear to have the right skills and experience to deliver the project? (WEIGHT 15%)
- Are the costs justified and appropriate? (WEIGHT 5%)

Bids will be reviewed by the NHS Cancer Programme Innovation team at NHS England to assess whether proposals align with the NHS Cancer Programme's priorities.



The NHS Cancer Programme is expecting that applicants actively engage in tackling healthcare inequalities, and in supporting diversity and inclusion, while drafting their proposal, by including communities where the proposed innovation will make the biggest impact. NHS England are committed to give patients and the public a voice. The NHS Cancer Programme has embraced this vision and has incorporated patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in the scheme to ensure the proposed innovation addresses the needs of patients and carers, as well as clinicians and health system leaders and users.

PPIE is an accepted and recommended working practice within healthcare research ensuring that solutions are co-produced with patients, meet patient needs and to ensure there is an acceptability among end-users. Applicants are expected to develop a thorough PPIE strategy as part of their projects.

Applicants are also invited to consider the environmental impact of their innovations to support the net-zero commitment that the NHS has set in the [Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service report](#).

Shortlisted applicants will be notified after the shortlisting meeting and invited to an interview meeting to present their proposal to the Interview Panel, which will be made of a subgroup of the Panel of experts that participated in the shortlisting process. The interview takes the form of a short presentation (typically 10-15 minutes) followed by a question-and-answer session with the Panel members. Ahead of the Panel interview, shortlisted applications will undergo further assessment, including:

- Independent external peer and public reviews.
- An impact analysis of the innovation on early diagnosis of cancer, performed by the NHS England Cancer Analysis and Insight (CAIT) Team. The analysis will be completed based on the data and information submitted in the application and in the “Early diagnosis impact assessment”. ***Please note: The NHS England CAIT may engage with the applicants between the shortlisting and interview Panel to ensure a robust and fair impact analysis can be completed.***
- An assessment of the strategic alignment of the proposed solution to existing NHS programmes and the potential impact on the specified cancer pathway, performed by NHS England Internal Peer Reviewers.
- An assessment of the proposed evaluation plan performed by NHS England Cancer Analysis and Insight – Evaluation team.

The applicants will have access to the anonymised reviewers’ comments and are encouraged to use the Panel interview opportunity to address them during their interview.

The Panel will score shortlisted applications according to the following assessment criteria:

- a) How well does the proposed technology meet the competition brief?
- b) To what extent does the proposed technology offer potential clinical benefit to the NHS and/or social care settings?
- c) How strong is the team (including partners and sub-contractors,) with particular reference to the delivery of milestones relevant to the project?
- d) How well is the case for commercial and NHS sustainability made and does the solution offer value for money?



The outcome of awards will be communicated to applicants after the Panel meeting and contracts for successful applicants will be awarded shortly thereafter.

Conditions

By applying, organisations are automatically consenting to the terms and conditions contained in the [NHS Cancer Programme Development Agreement](#).

The NHS Cancer Programme is committed to actively and openly supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion both in terms of the people who administer the programme and the innovators involved in the project, leading, delivering and supporting the project.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the personal information that you provide within the outline proposal will specifically be used for the purpose of administering the call. The information will be viewed by the SBRI Healthcare Programme Management Office and the NHS Cancer Programme assessors and will not be used for any other purpose without your specific consent.

Documents associated with this competition

- [Challenge Brief](#)
- Invitation to Tender (this document)
- [Applicant and Portal Guidance](#)
- [Sample Application Form](#)
- [Sample NHS Cancer Programme Development Agreement](#)
- [Early diagnosis impact assessment](#) (template relevant for all applicants)
- [Finance form](#) (template relevant for all applicants)
- Independent Evaluation documentation including:
 - [Evaluation Guidance for Applicants and Awardees](#)
 - [A Guide to Logic Models](#) for Applicants and Awardees
 - [Logic model](#) (template relevant for all applicants)
 - [An introductory Guide to Evaluation](#)
 - Templates relevant for awardees ([Data Metric mapping](#), [Evaluation Mapping](#), [Evaluation Strategy](#))
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

Monitoring Expectations for the Awardees

The monitoring process starts upon execution of the [NHS Cancer Programme Development Agreement](#).

All awarded projects are expected to start by a set date that will be communicated in the outcome letter (currently expected to be no later than end of January 2025).

Project teams should consider budgeting appropriate time and resources for a **set-up phase** of ~ 4-6 months followed by real-world implementation and data analysis.

Written and verbal reports of the project's progress and details of the actual expenditure on the project activities should be provided on a regular basis throughout the project (monthly and/or quarterly).

Set-up phase

The set-up period will enable project teams to undertake the following activities and ensure that the proposed innovation is ready to be implemented in a real-world setting (i.e., 'go-live'):

- **Medtech Early Technical Assessment (META) Tool** - A [NICE META tool](#) will be offered free of charge unless the awardees have recently completed one. The SBRI Healthcare PMO will introduce a NICE facilitator to the project team after the contract is fully executed. The META tool should be completed within the first 2-3 months from the project start, so that it can inform the independent evaluation.
- **Review and approvals** - NHS Research Ethics Committee (REC) review and/or any other review(s)/approval(s) needed to start the implementation (e.g., Advisory Group/Committee, sponsorship confirmation, sign-off from NHS provider(s)) must be completed in time to ensure that everything is in place before the project's 'go-live' date.

IMPORTANT: Please note that all projects targeted at the bowel, breast, or cervical screening programmes will need to be reviewed from the Screening Research Innovation and Development Advisory Committee ([RIDAC](#)) before 'go-live'. Applicants are recommended to start engagement with the RIDAC team (england.screening.research@nhs.net) for advice on project feasibility as early as possible (preferably pre-funding or ethics approval).

- **Health inequalities and Patient Community Engagement** - The awardees are expected to actively engage in tackling healthcare inequality and actively involve patients and community. The proposed innovations must address the needs of patients and carers, as well as clinicians and health system leaders and users. Innovations should be co-produced with patients, meet patient needs, and ensure there is an acceptability among end-users. The project team will be asked to:
 - Complete [Health Equity Assessment Tool \(HEAT\)](#)
 - Attend a 1:1 session with the NHE England (NHSE) Health Inequalities and Patient Community Engagement team.
 - Submit a health inequalities and patient community engagement strategy, which will be reviewed by the Health Inequalities and Patient Community Engagement team and might provide comments to address.
- **Independent service Evaluation** -The awardees must complete an independent service evaluation to determine the impact of their innovation and develop the evidence-base required to support larger scale implementation. The project team will be asked to:
 - Appoint an independent evaluator, if they haven't done so already.
 - Attend a 1:1 session with the Evaluation team at NHSE.
 - Submit an evaluation strategy along the relevant documentation (i.e., logic model,



scoping plan and evaluation data metric mapping), which will be reviewed by the NHSE Evaluation team and might provide comments to address.

- **Measuring project progress** – a list of metrics will be agreed with the SBRI Healthcare PMO and NHSE to report on a regular basis on project progress and early outcomes in early cancer detection and diagnosis.

Support Available

Awardees will benefit from the support of relevant NHSE teams and the SBRI Healthcare PMO during the set-up phase and throughout the project.

Webinars, drop-in sessions and meetings with experts will be organised by SBRI Healthcare PMO and NHSE during the set-up phase.

Awardees will also have the opportunity to take part to Networking events and present their innovations to Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and a broad range of stakeholders (e.g., investors, Cancer Alliances (CAs), NHSE).

Contact Points

Questions and comments are very welcome while the competition is open. Questions on the challenge and scope of this NHS Cancer Programme competition should be addressed to LGC Ltd via email sbri@lgcgroup.com.

Questions will only be accepted when received through this route.

For further information on this NHS Cancer Programme competition, visit:

<https://sbrihealthcare.co.uk/competitions/nhs-cancer-programme-innovation-open-call-3>

For more information on other initiatives of the SBRI Healthcare programme, visit:

<https://sbrihealthcare.co.uk/>