

Emerging Threats Funding Call: Mpox

Application Guidance

This is a joint funding call only eligible to NIHR HPRU EZI Investigators and TPI Investigators – see eligibility requirements for further details.

Scope

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Protection Research Unit in Emerging and Zoonotic Infections (HPRU EZI) and The Pandemic Institute (TPI) in Liverpool are announcing a combined funding call for research on mpox. The aim of the investment is to address critical research gaps in mpox knowledge, specifically in improving our understanding of the Clade I variant.

Mpox disease is caused by the monkeypox virus (MPXV), an enveloped double-stranded DNA virus of the *Orthopoxvirus* genus in the *Poxviridae* family. The two genetic clades of the virus are Clades I and II. Clade II MPXV is responsible for the global outbreak that began in 2022. Clade I MPXV is currently considered more severe than Clade II MPXV, leading to its classification as a high consequence infectious disease (HCID).

On 14 August 2024, the World Health Organisation (WHO) determined that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR).

Potential areas of interest for this funding call include development and evaluation of diagnostic tests including point of care tests, development and evaluation of vaccines and effective vaccination strategies including comparison of different vaccines, levels of immunity in GBMSM population, behavioural aspects including effective communication and uptake of interventions, evaluation of wastewater surveillance, pathogen characterisation and immunology.

Funding Available

We aim to fund a range of projects. The size of grants will vary according to the needs of each research project, but you will need to provide a robust case regarding value for money.

Proposal duration: minimum 3 months – maximum 12 months.

Please note funding from NIHR HPRU EZI and TPI funding pots have different eligibility requirements. We recognise this creates complications; but we think this is offset by the advantage of a single combined funding call. Your application may be eligible for one or two of the funding pots, depending on the nature of the project and the co-applicants.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for support from:

- **the NIHR HPRU EZI fund**, applications must include HPRU EZI investigators from at least two of the following organisations: University of Liverpool (UoL), Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of Oxford (UoX), or the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). Applications should be led by a principal investigator from one of these organisations. All milestones must be completed by March 2025.

Please note that the following research areas are excluded from the HPRU EZI call:

- Animal research: the NIHR does not support work involving animals or their tissues.
- De novo development of new vaccines and therapeutics.
- Clinical trials that we would normally expect to be funded through other NIHR programmes.
- **Only three-month projects are considered**

- **TPI Liverpool fund**, applications must include investigators from at least two of the following organisations: UoL, LSTM, Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LUHFT), Liverpool City Council (LCC), Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), or Knowledge Quarter Liverpool (KQ Liverpool). Applications should be led by a principal investigator from one of these organisations.

For NIHR HPRU EZI funded projects, it is expected that funding will start immediately.

Please note, an individual can only be named as a Principal Investigator on one application to this funding call. External investigators can be included as co-applicants.

If you have any queries, or require support please email: contact@thepandemicinstitute.org

Full proposals submitted will:

- Address a critical gap in the UK's research response to mpox.
- Provide a robust case for value for money.
- Be deliverable for a total cost of £30,000 or less.

Application Form

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The application form can be accessed via an [online form](#). You must describe the proposed work, how it fits within the scope of this fund and your track record as an investigator.

The full summary of questions in the application form is included below.

Review Process

Full proposals will be reviewed and scored by a broad, cross-disciplinary panel. Applications will be scored using the following indicators: (1) Scientific quality and impact; (2) Scientific leadership; (3) Justification of resources.

Timeline

Funding call opens: 30/09/2024

Funding call closes: 23/10/2024 (17:00 UK time)

Review period: 24/10/2024 to 08/11/2024

Expected Funding Decision: Week commencing 11/11/2024

Eligible Costs

An indicative funding total, with a brief budget breakdown is requested at this stage. Please discuss draft costings with the appropriate department within your institution for indicative costs.

A full breakdown of project costs and contact details for the post award team will be required at the point of award notification. Please note, eligible and ineligible costs for the two funding sources vary.

For **TPI Liverpool fund**, eligible costs directly associated with the project are as follows:

Heading	Type	Eligible	Example
Salaries	Directly Allocated	No	Principal Investigator Pooled Administrative/Technical
	Directly Incurred	Yes	Research Associates/Assistants Project Specific Administrative/Technical
Fees	Directly Incurred	Yes	Access costs to specialist facilities essential to the success the project. Contractors such as data management specialist, specialist facilities including laboratories and workshop spaces.
	Directly Incurred	No	Publication fees.
	Indirect	No	Estates cost, overheads, rent, utilities, officers' salaries, accounting department costs and personnel department costs. Institutional access charges.
Equipment	Directly Incurred	Yes	Computers, research equipment
Consumables	Directly Incurred	Yes	Research Consumables, software
Travel & Subsistence	Directly Incurred	Yes	Reasonable travel and subsistence costs for eligible project individuals. Costs must be necessary and incurred exclusively for the progression of your project. Travel costs must be at economy travel only.
Training	Directly Incurred	No	Training specific to and necessary for the project success.

For the **NIHR HPRU EZI fund**, research involving animals or animal tissue is ineligible for funding. International research, outside of the UK is also ineligible for funding.

Should you have any questions regarding eligible costs at this stage, please email the following:

- For the TPI, Liverpool fund: contact@thepandemicinstitute.org
- For the NIHR HPRU EZI fund: hpruei@liverpool.ac.uk

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Application Form - Summary of Questions

The online form can be accessed here: <https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/liverpool/emerging-threats-funding-call-mpox>

Q1: Your name:

Q2: Your contact telephone no:

Q3: Your email address:

Q4: Your institution:

Q5: Your Department/School:

Q6: Please detail relevant features of your track record in terms of research funding, publications and impact. (max. 200 words)

Q7: Please state additional Co-Investigators and Institutions (please refer to the application guidance to ensure all requirements are met).

Q8: Are you applying for support from (please tick all those which apply and refer to the application guidance for further information).

1. NIHR HPRU EZI
2. TPI, Liverpool

Q9: Have you acquired, applied or are you aiming to leverage additional funds or match-fund from other sources in association with this “mpox” funding call?

Q10: Project Title:

Q11: Project Start Date:

Q12: Project End Date:

Q13: Please provide an abstract (max. 200 words):

Q14: Provide an activity / project overview, stating clearly your project aims, measurable objectives, expected outcomes, deliverables and impact (max. 500 words):

Q15: The scope of this investment is to address critical gaps in the UKs research response to mpox and to strengthen collaboration between TPI / NIHR HPRU EZI investigators. Please outline how this project fits the scope and requirements of this investment? (max. 300 words)

Q16: Please outline how this project enables positioning for future related external funding calls. How would this award fit into your longer-term career and / or research plans? (max. 200 words)

Q17: Please describe the strategic benefit of your project to TPI / NIHR HPRU EZI (max. 200 words).

Q18: Total funds requested (in GBP)

Q19: Please provide a justification of costs, including a brief budget breakdown (max. 200 words)

Q20: Please provide a summary of how the funding will be spent, including a timeline of activities (max. 200 words).

Q21: Please note: in the event of a successful application, funds will be released, subject to a suitable contract between the relevant involved partners. Please confirm (tick) your understanding and take your time to review your answers before proceeding to submit.