Webinar Q&A: Challenge Programme 2027 "Heat and Hypertension"

Guidelines are here: https://novonordiskfonden.dk//app/uploads/Guidelines_Challenge-Programme-2027-Heat-and-hypertension-understanding-the-mechanisms-of-interaction.pdf

(A) Questions related to scientific scope

A1

Q: How many of the objectives should be addressed?

A :The suggested example areas of research provided are by no means exhaustive and it is not suggested that one proposal should address all areas. A strong proposal will address the outlined challenge using human-centric mechanistic research that is interdisciplinary and with clear translational potential.

A2

Q: How does the call view related cardiovascular conditions (stroke, arrhythmia, atherosclerosis) - or only hypertension?

A: We understand that hypertension is interlinked with other cardiovascular and non-cardiovascular conditions. Therefore, exploring the mechanistic links between heat and hypertension in the setting of other conditions is acceptable but should be clearly rationalised.

A3

Q: SHR rats are the very well-known hypertensive rats can we use them to make proper conditions or should we generate new animal models?

A: Firstly, it is always a good idea to provide rationale for why you are using a particular animal model to answer your hypothesis. Secondly, we recognise that existing models are not always perfect, therefore the develop of new models in parallel with the use of existing models is acceptable, but the proposal outcomes should not hinge or predominantly focus on model development.

(B) Questions related to eligibility

B1

Q: Can researchers from LMICs be a co-applicants?

A: As stated in the guidelines, the main applicant from the consortium must be based at an EU, Schengen or UK institution, and one applicant (either main or co-applicant) must be based at a Danish Institution. The remaining co-applicants (maximum 3) can be based at any institution globally.

B2
Q: Is it possible to include US institutions
A: Same as answer to question B1 above.

B3
Q: Are UK institutions eligible to be a lead applicant?
A: Same as answer to question B1 above.

B4
Q: Does the main applicant need a time delimited employment at the host institution? (hospital based researchers are often employed a few years at a time)
A: The main applicant must be an independent tenured/tenure-track researcher with their own research group, employed at a European (European Union, Schengen Area plus United Kingdom) university, hospital, or non-profit research organisation. The main applicant needs to be employed during the entire project period.

B5
Q: Are you allowed to be part of more than one application?
A: Yes, but only as a co-applicant you can be involved in up to two applications. Main applicants can only be part in one application.

B6
Q: Are multiple bids permitted from the same institution?
A: Yes, there is no limit on how many applications can be anchored at any one institution. However, there are strict eligibility criteria for the applicants (PI and Co-PI's), and how many applications they can be a part of. More details can be found in the guidelines.

(C) Questions related to team/consortium

C1
Q: Are the collaborators expected to be from different countries?
A: As long as the consortium meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the call guidelines the main and co-applicants can be from the same country. However, we encourage you to chose your project partners according to their expertise and role in the project.

C2
Q: Do Danish colleagues need to be co-applicants or can be collaborators?
A: The Danish colleagues need to be co-applicants.

C3
Q: Do you have any advice how to find an interested Danish collaborator?

A: We encourage you to be pro-active in finding relevant collaborators, such as through literature search, conferences etc.

C4

Q: Can collaborators / applicants be from within the same institution (ie university) but for example from different departments?

A: The eligibility rules apply to the applicants (i.e. the scientists). Therefore, as long as the applicants from the same institution have their own, independent research groups they would count as seperate applicants, even if they are based at the same institution. However, we encourage you to collaborate beyond your institution, as the selected projects will be highly ambitious and highly collaborative.

C5

Q: I wonder about the number of collaborators. Should it be three or four in total? And is it possible to have more collaborators in a multicentric project?

A: As outlined in call guidelines the consortium consists of one main applicant and up to 3 co-applicants. Addition project partners or collaborators can be included in the project, but cannot receive any funding.

C6

Q: Besides the Applicant and Co-applicants, are other partners allowed to be involved, e.g. if they do not receive funds directly but are contributing? e.g. NGOs?

A: Yes. There is no limit on how many collaborators are allowed to be involved, but they are not allowed to receive funding, unless specified in the budget as sub-contractor costs (i.e., used for a specific service).

(D) Other

D1

Q: Any plan on joint meetings/sharing knowledge and perhaps even data and e.g. samples between funded projects. Think it could very relevant for this call. I see potential synergy effects

A: As outlined in the call guidelines the grant recipients within each theme are encouraged, to co-ordinate a thematic symposium during the grant period, in year 3 or year 4 to facilitate network building and knowledge sharing.

D2

Q: Are the evaluation criteria available for this call?

A: The assessment criteria can be found in the call guidelines. (page 6, Section 1.7)

(E) Questions related to budget and costs

E1

Q: What level of detail is needed in the stage 1 budget?

A: We expect that you have an idea of the budget for your project, but a detailed budget is not required for stage 1. Only the total estimated cost that you are applying for is required. A detailed budget with an exact total is to be submitted if you are invited for stage 2.

E2

Q: Can fundraising or other support staff be included in the direct administrative costs? What are the reporting requirements for direct administrative costs?

A: The call covers 5% of administrative costs that are directly linked to the project. If these costs can be directly linked to project, they are eligible costs.

E6

Q: Can costs for collaborators who are not co-applicants be included?

A: The funds from this grant should primarily be used by the main or co-applicants in the consortium. The budget cannot be allocated to additional collaborators, unless the expenses are sub-contractor costs, i.e., a specific service provided. Please also be aware that the budget is not part of the stage 1 application.

E8

Q: Are the indirect costs of a subcontractor also limited to 5%? This will exclude most investigators from the US from collaborating on this Challenge.

A: Yes, unfortunately the Novo Nordisk Foundation does not cover more than 5% indirect costs, either for main or co applicants, or for collaborators/subcontractors. But please be aware that many of the costs that overhead or indirect costs normally will cover can be included in the budget as expenses, they just have to be specified and related to the project.

E9

Q: Does the application have to be ambitious? if we have a plan at a budget scale of 2-3 million EURO, would this still be considered?

A: This is a highly competitive call, and the applications have to be very ambitious 6-year projects. The minimum you can apply for is approx. 4 million EUR, with a maximum of 10 million EUR.

E10

Q: Is the award open to covering a PhD studentship programme with students at multiple sites plus exchange visits?

A: Yes, those PhD costs can be included.