NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

Swiss National Science Foundation

# Swiss-UK Clinical Trials 2025

## Questions & Answers

**Are collaborative projects from academics and start-ups funded?**
The two lead applicants must be researchers, not start-ups. It is possible to include commercial partners as project partners, but it must be shown that they do not benefit financially from this clinical trial.

**What is the definition of 'novel' research in relation to this funding opportunity?**
Novel is a new study, not one that has been already approved for funding or which has ethical approval of the protocol, or is seeking to add new arms to this. Active or existing investigator-led randomised controlled trials, or clinical study protocols that have already been submitted and/or approved for funding, are not within the scope.

**We have previously been rejected by another funding scheme. Can we re-submit to this one?**
Providing you have had a final outcome from the other scheme, and your application is appropriately adapted to fit the remit of this funding opportunity, and that any relevant feedback from the previous submission is taken into account, then yes you can apply. There is a section in the application form for you to provide details of its submission history and what changes/improvements have been made.

**What is the maximum number of applications a lead/joint lead applicant can submit to this funding opportunity?**
One.

**What phases of clinical trials will we support?**
Phase 2b and 3.

**What is the possible time window to start the clinical trial?**
Studies can start as of December 2026 and the latest by December 2027.

**What is the maximum funding that can be requested?**
There is no set upper limit for funding – applicants will be expected to justify their costs. For information, the SNSF and NIHR have jointly committed in the region of 8.8 million CHF/£8 million GBP to this funding opportunity and we are anticipating funding 2-3 awards for collaborative Swiss-UK clinical studies from that.

**Can the Swiss partner have partners in a third country?**
Yes. Swiss-based researchers can dedicate up to 20% of the Swiss budget for project partners and services from third countries, including for patient recruitment. NIHR is not able to pay recruitment costs for other countries from the UK funding.

**What percentage of participants can be recruited from another country from the Swiss side?**
There are two different things intersecting here. On the one hand, at least 20% of recruitment must be in the UK and at least 20% must be in Switzerland, so the rest of the recruitment could (theoretically) be in a different country. However, a maximum of 20% of the Swiss budget can go to partners from third countries, which would probably limit how many patients could be recruited there.

**What conditions are required regarding research data to apply?**
We ask researchers to register their studies with the Swiss National Clinical Trials Portal, submit their trial protocol, and provide annual updates on their project's progress. Additionally, researchers are expected to register with the WHO primary registry or clinicaltrials.gov.

**Do trials require one sponsor or two (one in the UK and one in Switzerland)?**
Applicants will need to decide, identify and justify the best model/approach for their proposed study. We recommended consideration is given to appointing a sponsor in each jurisdiction as a practical solution, especially if the UK organisation may face challenges in acting as a single sponsor.

**Can research capacity include PhD studentships or is it limited to postdoc development?**
For this particular funding opportunity, the focus of the capacity-building component is very much on supporting early and mid-career researchers at post-doctoral level. For the purposes of this funding opportunity, we consider early career researchers to be postdoctoral researchers or MD clinicians or practitioners with equivalent experience and working towards early independence. Mid-career researchers are those with postdoctoral experience or MD clinicians or practitioners with equivalent experience who are starting to establish themselves as independent researchers, but are as yet without substantial independent grant funding and do not hold a chair position.

**Can a lead also be a Named Point of Contact (NPC) for training and development?**
Yes – it can be the lead applicant, a co-applicant with relevant experience, or an existing dedicated research career lead from the contracting or a collaborating institution. It doesn't have to have a supervisory or formal role, but rather an advisory and supportive role.

**How do you assess whether a specific project meets the NICE or JLA priorities? The latter tend to be quite broad.**
We would review the justification you have provided as to how your study aligns with a NICE or JLA priority, compare this with what the NICE/JLA have outlined as priorities, and use our own judgment. If there is any ambiguity, we would consult directly with JLA/NICE. That said, even if the alignment is not immediately clear, it generally does not preclude the idea from being considered.

**Are studies using a novel medical device that might not have received CE or UKCA by the end of 2026 eligible?**
Yes. NIHR and SNSF are flexible on whether CE/UKCA is necessary or not. You should explain why you haven't got it and what your path to impact is – obtaining those marks is probably part of the path, so tell us at what point you intend to obtain them.

**Is there a requirement to include a placebo arm?**
No – although you need to have an appropriate comparator for an effectiveness study, it's likely that a placebo arm will be inappropriate. Pick the best comparator for your study and justify this to us.

**With medical devices, blinding is not always possible. Is it a stringent requirement?**
Blinding is context dependent. Sometimes it is required, and sometimes it cannot be done. You should tell us why it cannot be done, and how you intend to minimise bias that results from lack of blinding. You may be able to consider blinding the assessor?

**We're planning a large study with match funding from a third-party charity. Are we eligible for this call and at what point do we need to have the match funding in place?**
We would expect applicants to outline their match funding plans at the initial outline application stage (e.g. a letter of intent) and to provide further evidence of a firm commitment from the match funder if you progress to full application stage.

**Will there be further rounds of this funding opportunity in the future?**
At present there are no plans to continue beyond this current round. Please keep an eye on our funding opportunities webpage to stay up-to-date with this.

**Useful links:**
NIHR funding opportunity guidance
NIHR outline application form guidance
SNSF opportunity guidelines
mySNF
Scientific Exchanges

**Email addresses for queries:**
NIHR: Internationalapplications@nihr.ac.uk
SNSF: international@snf.ch