



# NHS Cancer Programme Innovation Open Call

## 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 competition [website](#).

## Summary

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) is looking for innovations or new approaches that will increase the proportion of cancers that are diagnosed at stage one or two. The competition is open to all types of innovations, including but not limited to, medical devices, *in vitro* diagnostics, digital health solutions, behavioural interventions, software, artificial intelligence or new models of care. Innovations can be tumour specific or multi-cancer. Applications from multi-cancer innovations which could have a bigger impact on early diagnosis rates are particularly welcome.

Further details are outlined in the [Challenge Brief](#).

## Application Process

Details of the background, challenges and expected outcomes of the projects can be found in the Challenge Brief. We strongly advise applicants to read the Applicant and Portal Guidance before submitting an application.

This competition is developed and led by the NHS Cancer Programme and it is supported by the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Healthcare Programme and the NHS Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC). The call is open to any innovation with proven efficacy and clinical effectiveness, which meets the following requirements:

- CE mark or equivalent regulatory approval obtained (if required for your innovation), and /or
- in use in at least 1 Trust in standard routine care (non-research)

The aim of this programme is to accelerate these innovations into front-line clinical settings by shortening the gap between the evidence collated from traditional safety/efficacy clinical trials typically required for regulatory approvals (CE marking or equivalent), and the evidence required by commissioners to make purchasing decisions.

The competition is open to single organisations (contracts are executed with individual legal entities) based in the UK or EU from the private, public and third sectors, including companies (large corporates and small and medium enterprises), charities, universities and NHS Foundation Trusts, as long as a strong implementation and commercial strategy is provided. Organisations based outside the UK or EU with innovations in remit for this call can apply as subcontractors of a lead UK/EU based organisation or via a UK or EU subsidiary. However, due to the nature of the projects supported, all proposals are expected to have partnerships in place with at least an NHS organisation in England, if they are not already led by one, and engage with appropriate suppliers to cover the expertise required for the successful delivery of the project. Engagement with Cancer Alliances and/or Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) is strongly encouraged. Please note that only NHS clinical sites based in England are eligible.



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In the first instance, projects may request for a maximum of **18 months** and **up to £4M (excl VAT)**. Please ensure the proposed project deliverables could be reasonably achieved within the suggested contract duration, and all requested costs be justified.

Promising innovations may have the opportunity to bid for additional funding (for example scaling up implementation, supporting independent evaluations, etc.) at the end of the contract duration subject to an independent review process. Suppliers for each project 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.

Applicants should state their goals and outline plans, as an explicit part of the path to full implementation, in their proposal.

A briefing event for organisations interested in finding out more about the competition was held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (a recording is available [here](#)), and a match-making event with Cancer Alliances and AHSNs will be held on 24 March 2022. Please visit the competition website for more information.

All applications must be made using the application portal, which can be accessed through the [Research Management System](#). The form must be completed and submitted electronically through the online application portal. Only applications received **by 1:00pm GMT on 24 May 2022** will be accepted.

Applicants are invited to consult this Invitation to Tender alongside the Applicant and Portal Guidance and the [Challenge Brief](#); a template Application Form is also accessible on the website. Frequently Asked Questions will also be published. All documents are available on the [competition website](#) to help prepare your proposal.

PLEASE **DO NOT** SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS BY POST OR BY ANY OTHER MEANS THAN THROUGH THE PORTAL, AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

## Key dates

Competition launch	05 April 2022
Briefing event	Thursday 24 February 2022, virtual event
Cancer Alliance and AHSN Match-making event	24 March 2022, virtual event
Deadline for applications	24 May 2022, 1pm
Assessment	May/June 2022
Interview Panel	Mid-September 2022
Contracts awarded	October 2022



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## Assessment process

A diagram of the process for application and assessment is shown below (Figure 1): all applications will be reviewed by a selected Panel of experts who will provide feedback on the applications according to the following criteria, which are weighted differently:

### The assessment criteria will include:

- How well does the proposal address the challenge outlined in the brief and how significant is the impact on early cancer diagnosis? 20%
- How convincing is the evidence accumulated to date? 20%
- Are the project plan (including evaluation and patient and public involvement), deliverables and risk mitigation strategy appropriate? 15%
- Will the solution have a competitive advantage over standard of care and existing alternative solutions, how innovative is the proposal and are the arrangements surrounding the use and development of Intellectual Property appropriate? 10%
- Does the proposed project have appropriate NHS/social care implementation, spread and adoption strategy and commercialisation plans? 5%
- Does the project address Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Net Zero Policy? 5%
- Does the organisation and project team appear to have the right skills and experience to deliver the project? 15%
- Are the costs justified and appropriate? 10%

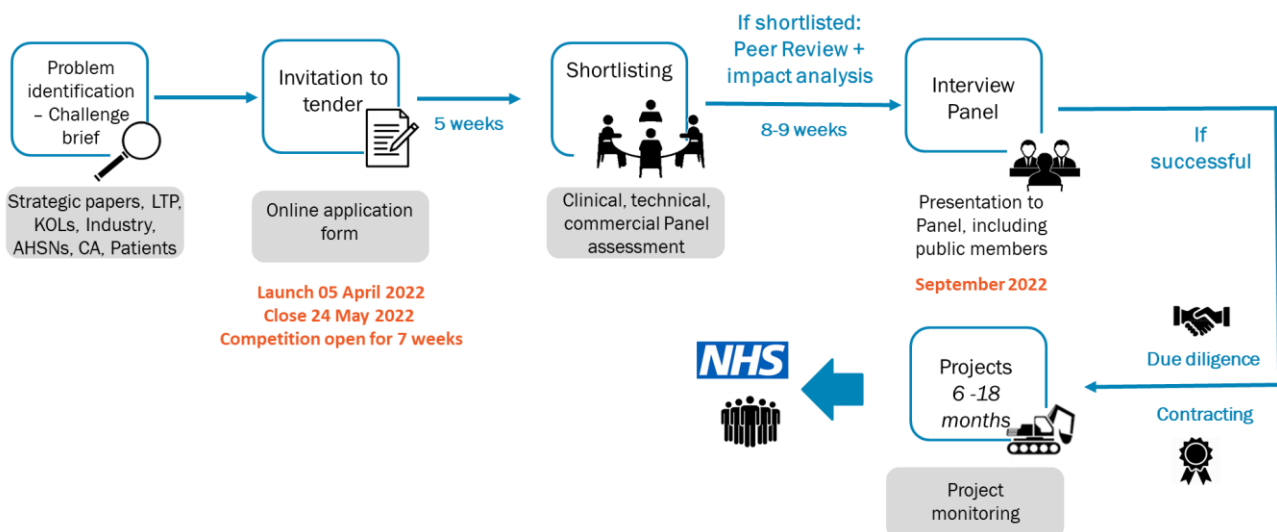


Figure 1: Diagram of the NHS Cancer Programme Open call

Applications will be shortlisted based on discussions and feedback from a Panel of experts as well as an assessment conducted by the NHSEI analytics team on the potential impact of the innovation on early diagnosis of cancer. The analysis will be completed based on the data and information submitted in the application (4b).



The shortlisted applications will be subjected to independent external peer reviews and a more detailed assessment by the NHSEI analytics team. Shortlisted applicants will have access to the anonymised peer reviewers' comments and invited to an interview meeting to present their proposal to the Selection Panel. Applicants are encouraged to rebut peer reviewers' comments during their interview. The interview takes the form of a short presentation (typically 10 minutes) followed by a question-and-answer session with the Panel members.

Successful applicants will be advised according to the published key dates, and organisations will be expected to mobilise rapidly to start the project. It is important that projects start soon after the contract has been issued so that all projects can be assessed fairly and move on concurrently and smoothly.

The NHS Cancer Programme is expecting that applicants actively engage in tackling healthcare inequality, and in supporting diversity and inclusion while drafting their proposal, by including communities where the proposed innovation will make the biggest impact. If successful, awardees must complete an Equality and Health Inequalities Assessment (EHIA)

NHS England and NHS Improvement 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 discuss a PPIE strategy as part of their projects.

## Conditions

By applying, organisations are automatically consenting to the terms and conditions contained in the Contract.

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 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. For further information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold on you, please contact the team by email: [sbri@lgcgroup.com](mailto:sbri@lgcgroup.com).



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## Documents associated with this competition

- Challenge Brief
- Invitation to Tender
- Applicant and Portal Guidance
- Sample Application Form

## Contact Points

Questions and comments are very welcome while the competition is open. Questions **on the challenges and scope of this NHS Cancer Programme competition** should be addressed to LGC Ltd via email [sbri@lgcgroup.com](mailto:sbri@lgcgroup.com); questions on the overall SBRI programme should be addressed to [support@innovateuk.gov.uk](mailto:support@innovateuk.gov.uk). Questions will only be accepted when received through this route. **After 23 May 2022, no new questions will be answered.**

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

<https://sbrihealthcare.co.uk/competition/nhs-cancer-programme-competition-2/>

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

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

For more information about the SBRI programme, visit:

[www.innovateuk.org/SBRI](http://www.innovateuk.org/SBRI)



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