**CSO Covid-19 Research funding proposal**

**Rapid Research in Covid -19 programme (RARC-19 programme)**

**Closing date 5pm Wednesday 8th April 2020**

The Scottish Government is making funding available for research aimed at tackling the challenges posed by the current Covid-19 pandemic in Scotland.

The Chief Scientist Office (CSO) will manage this resource to fund studies that allow fundamental science being conducted in Scottish Academic Institutions to be applied to issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The research will draw on the very best science and methodologies in Scotland to address specific issues, with the expectation that studies can start immediately on award of funding and will be completed within 3 - 6 months. CSO can work with successful applicants to help expedite the necessary research governance reviews and to approve fast track ethical opinion to ensure rapid study start-up. Studies will address specific hypotheses through a range of research approaches, including experimental medicine, data science or social science. The outputs from this research will provide timely evidence to inform clinical practice and policy relevant to the current pandemic.

Where support of the NHS for use of resources is required then evidence of the support of the local nodal Health Board, or special Boards (as appropriate) must be provided.

**Application Process**

CSO wishes to capture the extraordinarily strong research base in Scottish Universities. Many academics are already thinking about how their research can be used for benefit in this national and international emergency. CSO has therefore decided to ask Scottish Universities to apply for funding for a portfolio of Covid-19 research drawn from the best ideas from research investigators in their institutions. In particular we are looking for projects that address the following key priority areas:

* Improved characterisation and treatment of infection and sequalae, including novel diagnostic and therapeutic approaches
* Development of new surveillance approaches that can be implemented rapidly
* Novel interventions to help prevent infection, particularly for those providing care
* To support the resilience and mental health of front line health and care staff including those who returned to the NHS or came early from nursing or medical schools into the workforce
* Understanding the longer-term health impacts of social distancing and other behavioural interventions introduced to prevent the spread of infection in the population

Universities are asked to submit succinct details of a portfolio of proposed studies that address these areas on the application form below **by 5pm on Wednesday 8th April 2020** to csograntapplications@gov.scot

Universities that are planning to submit a portfolio should send through details of their lead contact by 2 April 2020 to csograntapplications@gov.scot

In the portfolio application, Universities will be required to supply indicative costs for each project. The total overall sum requested for a single portfolio application from any individual institution (or group of institutions if working on a portfolio in collaboration) should be no more than £1.25 million. Please note that only direct costs will be covered in this call and that overhead should not be included. CSO will review these portfolio applications and will make funding decisions at the individual project level. These decisions will be based principally on scientific quality and clinical relevance, but overlap with other proposed projects from other Universities and feasibility within the time scale proposed will also be considered. Applications from Scottish Universities for portfolios proposed in collaboration are welcomed.

Studies within portfolios that involve collaboration with industry, the 3rd sector or existing externally-funded Centres and Institutes that bring expertise, access to reagents and matched funding are welcomed but are not an absolute requirement. Studies within portfolios that extend or can be built into the Scottish arm of studies funded by other organisations are also welcomed.

Funding decisions will be informed by advice from an independent expert panel convened by CSO and will be considered without additional external peer-review. Funding decisions will be based on considerations about the potential for significant direct impact including dissemination plans, feasibility, value for money, and relevance to the other criteria described above. **CSO will also take into consideration the overall balance and scope of the Scotland-wide portfolio when making project level funding decisions.**

Following award, project progress reports will be required at 2 months and a final report within 1 month after the project end date. CSO will provide a reporting template for these. Individual project funding will be allocated on the following basis: 50% initially, 35% on receipt of a satisfactory 2 month report, 15% on receipt of a satisfactory final report.

Data produced as a result of this funding will need to be shared in line with the [Joint statement on sharing research data and findings relevant to the novel coronavirus (nCoV) outbreak](https://wellcome.ac.uk/press-release/sharing-research-data-and-findings-relevant-novel-coronavirus-ncov-outbreak).

**Out of remit**

Hypothesis-generating studies

Studies that cannot be completed within 3-6 months

Studies that duplicate or overlap with other on-going studies (unless there is a strong rationale for replicating research in the Scottish context).