

Characteristics of Strong Proposals

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NHS RESEARCH AND PLANNING FUND: CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG PROPOSALS

As this year’s call will be conducted using a two-stage application process, this document will describe the characteristics of strong proposals for each stage.

Stage One – Section C – Project Overview

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
Stage One C.6 Partner Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief descriptions of the organizations and people involved in the project are included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unique contributions of each partner organization are described in relation to specific project activities and intended outcomes.

Stage One – Section D – Project Details

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
Stage One D.1 Project Summary/Description (550 words)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear description of the research question, knowledge gap or issue the project is trying to address. Clear rationale for why this question is important to address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project summary clearly states project objective, what is to be done in the project and what the project will produce. The applicant provides a clear explanation of the research question or issue to be addressed, and how the project will address it. The overall approach to undertaking the project and the outcomes are clearly stated.

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
<p>Stage One</p> <p>D.2 Objectives and Outcomes (250 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear description of the project objectives. • Clear description of the expected outputs of the project – what the project will produce – such as a research report, toolkit, briefing note to policymakers, workshop, roadmap, etc. • Description of the expected impact of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objectives, outputs and outcomes of the project are specific and clearly described. • The intended outcomes are realistic and not overstated. It is clear who could benefit from the project findings (e.g., policymakers, other organizations serving similar priority vulnerable groups). • There are logical links between the proposed objective, outputs and expected impact.
<p>Stage One</p> <p>D.3 Project Relevance (500 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevance of the project to the NHS priority areas for action and vulnerable groups is described. • Description provides a succinct, evidence-based description of the scope, depth, pervasiveness, and complexity of the issue/problem the research will address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant should demonstrate how their project will build critical knowledge to support their selected priority vulnerable groups. • It is clear how the objectives relate to the NHS priority areas for action and vulnerable groups. • The applicant demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the topic and its complexities, referencing current research or data or other documented evidence to illustrate the gap in knowledge. • If a gap in knowledge has been articulated by CMHC, other organizations or by other research, this is noted with detail on how the proposed project helps to address the gap. • The scale and approach of the proposed research/activity is appropriate to answer the question or respond to the knowledge gap. • The applicant has described the potential of the project to achieve significant regional and/or national impact. (How would findings be of benefit beyond the local jurisdiction? How could it have national impact? Is the project multi-jurisdictional?)

Stage Two – Section B – Project Overview

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
<p>Stage Two</p> <p>B.6 Project Team Details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief descriptions of the people involved in the project. • A response that addresses the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do the proposed team members align with the objectives (i.e., are they a good fit)? • To what degree will the composition of the team reflect the priority vulnerable groups/topic that is being researched, enhance outcomes, bring value to the project, and increase the probability of success? • What are the unique strengths and skills that each of the team members bring to the project? What will be their specific role and contribution? • Does the composition of the team strengthen leveraged outcomes through collaboration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application demonstrates the capacity of the team members (e.g., education, knowledge, skills, networks, and experience) for the delivery and implementation of the project. • Applicant indicates how the team members add value to the project and contribute to the probability of success such as the inclusion of individuals/organizations with different perspectives (e.g., service providers, people with lived experience, academics, policymakers) or specific expertise. • It is clear who is responsible for which aspects of the project, and how the team will be managed. The roles and responsibilities of the project team members are described.

Stage Two – Section C – Project Details

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
<p>Stage Two C.1 Budget (attachment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget includes all sources of revenue (including contributions from partners and applicant organizations) and anticipated costs in relation to project activities. • Budget is divided by project phases of work or milestones, and by fiscal year (April 1 - March 31). • Budget expenses are eligible activities as listed in the applicant guide. • A letter from each partner organization that is contributing funds or in-kind support. These letters outline the contribution type and amounts (cash or in-kind). The letter is addressed to the applicant and is dated and signed by the partner organization on letterhead. The applicant organization must also confirm their contribution (cash or in-kind) to the project (if any) with a signed letter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget includes all costs associated with the project – including what CMHC is asked to pay for and what contributions by others will pay for. • Budget line items are easy to understand and clearly linked to a source of revenue (CMHC or in-kind contributions). • Expenses are reasonable and comparable to industry or sector norms (i.e., in line with other proposals for similar costs). Any unusual expenses are explained. • In-kind contributions are reasonable and directly related to the project activities. • Appropriate budget is allocated for knowledge dissemination activities (if applicable).

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
<p>Stage Two</p> <p>C.2 Statement of Work/Methodology/ Project Activities (1,500-2,000 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provides a detailed breakdown of all the key activities and milestones involved in the delivery and implementation of the project. • Project management, quality assurance and contact with CMHC over the course of the project must be addressed. • Applicant incorporates a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) or other intersectional approach for the priority vulnerable group selected. • Applicant incorporates appropriate ethical considerations including privacy and confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement of work clearly describes the key activities, milestones, and deliverables. • The statement of work clearly articulates how the project will incorporate a GBA+ (or other appropriate intersectional) approach to the project and describes how this approach will inform each component of the work. • The research methods are explained, are clear and easy to understand, and are appropriate for the target priority vulnerable groups. • Research activities are clearly aligned with the research questions to be explored. • Applicant briefly describes strategies/plans for project coordination/management, quality assurance and reporting to CMHC. • Community-engaged or community-based participatory research methods are included when possible. • Where appropriate, the project meaningfully engages members of the priority vulnerable groups selected in project design and planning. • Expert methodologists are engaged where necessary.

Stage Two – Section D – Knowledge And Dissemination Plan

Application Section	What is Required	Characteristics of Strong Responses
<p>Stage Two</p> <p>D. Knowledge and Dissemination Plan (500-700 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application outlines how the findings of the project will be shared to ensure the project has the intended impact. • Application should include the knowledge products to be developed (case study, presentation, research reports, webinar, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be produced (e.g., information products) and how will it be shared (e.g., channels) with others (e.g., the audiences) to promote the findings and share lessons learned is clear. • Application describes how the proposed activities are intended to increase impact, the anticipated size and makeup of the target audience, and the objectives of the promotional activities. • Proposed knowledge exchange and dissemination activities are realistic and appropriate, draw upon the project team’s network and other networks to engage a range of relevant target audiences. • Consideration is given to non-conventional approaches (e.g., videos, social media) that go beyond reports, academic conferences, and publications.