Pump-Priming Collaborative Research Funding Call: The Pandemic Institute, Liverpool – Hong Kong Partnership, supported by The Shaw Foundation

Application Guidance

Scope

The Pandemic Institute (TPI): Liverpool – Hong Kong Partnership, supported by The Shaw Foundation are announcing a combined funding call for pump-priming research and collaborative partnerships to tackle emerging infections and pandemic threats.

The aim of the investment is to strengthen partnership between investigators based at three TPI founding partner academic institutions in the United Kingdom: Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of Liverpool (UoL), Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and; investigators from three Hong Kong academic institutions: Hong Kong University (HKU), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK).

Such collaboration between academic institutions working in infectious disease and pandemic sciences research is essential to strengthen global preparedness, resilience and response to emerging infections and pandemic threats.

This is an open call for research to tackle emerging infections and pandemic threats across all five domains of the pandemic lifecycle:

- **Predict** which pathogens might emerge.
- **Prepare** for likely threats.
- **Prevent** them from spreading globally.
- **Respond** through clinical and behavioural interventions.
- **Recover** helping society open.

Potential areas of scientific interest include (but are not limited to):

- Biodiversity and modelling of emerging and potential or established zoonotic pathogens.
- Genomic wastewater surveillance for emerging pathogens.
- Strengthening clinical surveillance for emerging infections.
- Near-patient testing for outbreak control.

This pump-priming funding is generously supported by The Shaw Foundation, and for projects that show early promise, there may be scope for additional funding. As such, we are looking to support not only research projects, but smaller collaborations in which research teams share data, resources or expertise leading to early tangible outputs, including joint publications.

We strongly encourage:

- Projects with novel ideas that bring together new partnerships between academic institutions. This could include networking activity for research teams to share data, resources and expertise leading to tangible outputs including joint publications.
- Applications which validate an approach or generate preliminary data to support an application to an external funding body.
- Applications from early career researchers.

Funding Available

We aim to fund a range of projects. The size of grants will vary according to the needs of each project, but funding should not exceed £30,000 GBP in total per project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit funding proposals for smaller projects (£10,000 - £20,000) that generate early tangible outputs.

All successful grantees will be eligible for additional travel funding for a collaborative research visit to Hong Kong (date tbc), for the launch of this programme. Further details of this will be given upon award notification.

Support In Submitting a Proposal

To help support the matching of TPI (LSTM, UoL, LJMU) and Hong Kong (HKU, PolyU, CUHK) academics, a **live google document** is available to add your contact information and areas of interest **here**. We encourage interested academics to add their information to the google document, and to also review this on a regular basis. TPI will provide support in matching academics from the information included on this google document.

If you have any queries about this funding call, please email: contact@thepandemicinstitute.org

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Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for support:

- Projects will have a focus on tackling emerging infections and pandemic threats.
- Projects must be deliverable for a total cost of £30,000 or less. This includes costs to both TPI founding partner institutions and Hong Kong academic institutions.
- Project duration must not exceed 12 months.
- Projects must start by 01/01/2026 at the very latest. Projects and all associated deliverables must be completed by 31/12/2026 – extensions beyond this date will not be permitted.
- Applications must include a Principal Investigator (PI) from a TPI founding partner institution (LSTM, UoL, LJMU) and a PI from a Hong Kong academic institution (HKU, PolyU, CUHK).
- Applications can include co-investigators from among these six academic institutions (LSTM, UoL, LJMU, HKU, PolyU, CUHK), who can receive funding.
- Applications can include co-investigators from external institutions (academics from institutions other than LSTM, UoL, LJMU, HKU, PolyU, CUHK) but they will not be eligible to receive any funding.
- All projects must include a funding allocation to at least one TPI founding partner institution (LSTM, UoL, LJMU), and at least one Hong Kong academic Institution (HKU, PolyU, CUHK). The percentage split of costs does not need to be equal between a TPI founding partner institution and a Hong Kong academic institution.
- Projects must meet the necessary ethical requirements.

Please note, an individual can only be named as a PI on one application to this funding call.

Application Process

Applicants must complete a brief expression of interest (EOI). We are conducting a mandatory EOI stage to evaluate alignment of prospective applications with the scope of this funding call.

The EOI template is available to download **here** (*go to File, then Download – Microsoft PowerPoint*) and must be submitted via email to contact@thepandemicinstitute.org by 5:00pm (UK time) on 21/07/2025. EOIs will undergo a preliminary review by the Partnership Strategic Committee.

Applicants may be invited to submit a full application (no more than three pages in length), potentially with guidance following the preliminary review. Full applications will be assessed by an expert review panel who will recommend proposals to be funded.

EOI and full applications must be submitted in English.

Timeline

Expression of Interest Opens: 30/06/2025

Expression of Interest Closes: 21/07/2025

Full Application Opens: 04/08/2025

Full Application Closes: 31/08/2025

Full Application Review Period: September 2025

Funding Decision: September 2025

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Eligible Costs

An indicative funding total for each academic institution is requested at the EOI stage. A full breakdown of project costs is required at the full application stage. Further detail on eligible costs for this funding call is included below:

Eligible Costs:			
Heading	**Type**	**Eligible**	**Example**
Salaries	Directly Allocated	No	Principal Investigator Pooled Administrative/Technical
	Directly Incurred	Yes	Research Associates/Assistants Project Specific Administrative/Technical
Fees	Directly Incurred	Yes	Access costs to specialist facilities essential to the success the project.
	Directly Incurred	Yes	Publication fees.
	Indirect	No	Estates cost, overheads, rent, utilities, officers' salaries, accounting department costs and personnel department costs. Institutional access charges.
Equipment	Directly Incurred	No	Computers, research equipment
Consumables	Directly Incurred	Yes	Research Consumables, software
Travel & Subsistence	Directly Incurred	Yes	Reasonable travel and subsistence costs for eligible project individuals. Costs must be necessary and incurred exclusively for the progression of your project. Travel costs must be at economy travel only.
Training	Directly Incurred	No	Training specific to and necessary for the project success.