

BIRAX Healthy Ageing Call for Research Proposals 2025

Advancing Healthy Ageing

Background

- Through the Britain-Israel Research and Academic Exchange (BIRAX) Programme, the British Council seeks to leverage the universal language of science to foster trust and establish meaningful, lasting collaborations. This is achieved through the provision of grants, scholar mobility opportunities, events, and networking initiatives. BIRAX facilitates the exchange of knowledge, understanding, skills, and research methods among institutions and researchers, while also engaging the wider community. Additionally, it promotes the dissemination, development, and application of research outcomes for the benefit of the public.
- BIRAX seeks promising proposals for research projects in the healthcare field, including on the understanding and prevention and treatment of disease, and in doing so, seeks to build a community of researchers and research institutions around a common interest in healthy ageing.

Call for Proposals

BIRAX is an initiative of the British Council and the British Embassy in Israel together with the Pears Foundation, investing in world-leading research jointly undertaken by scientists in the UK and Israel. BIRAX have awarded 32 research projects to date, investing over £12.5 million via five calls for proposals. Out of these, 13 projects totalling £5.2 million, were granted to projects focusing on ageing and its impact on human health.

We are now proud to launch the sixth call for proposals under BIRAX, focused on **Healthy Ageing**.

We invite research proposals **submitted jointly by scientists based in the UK and Israel** seeking to further our understanding of ageing and its impact on human health and wellbeing. We are interested in projects that use a holistic approach to healthy ageing, including pioneering techniques,

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state-of-the-art technologies and interdisciplinary approaches, showcasing the added value of international collaboration.

Focus Areas

Proposals will be assessed on scientific excellence, novelty, potential impact, and relevance to the call priorities. We particularly welcome proposals that explore:

- Biological mechanisms of ageing, including disease susceptibility, prevention, and mitigation.
- Precision medicine, including prediction of risk and early intervention at the individual level.
- Wellbeing interventions including nutrition, mobility preservation and social participation.

The above is not an exhaustive list, and proposals may address more than one area.

- Proposals must be relevant to at least one subject area as detailed in [Annex A](#).
- Please refer to [Annex B](#) for call timeline

Specific Research Priorities

To ensure alignment with the strategic aims of this Call for Proposals, all submitted proposals must be relevant to at least one of the priority areas listed below. These areas represent key challenges and opportunities within the field, and reflect a commitment to advancing high-impact, innovative, and relevant research in the sector. All proposals should take into consideration, where recruiting participants, the inclusion of a diverse population to ensure that the research is representative of the population, and the involvement of people with lived experience at different stages of the proposal (patient and public involvement).

1. **Research focused on women:** Promoting the understanding of mechanisms and treatments of age-related conditions specific to women, as well as differential impacts of age-related conditions in men and women, and medicines and treatments in relation to ageing women and healthy ageing in women.
2. **Pharmaceutical Research:** Focus on developing and evaluating new drugs or pharmaceutical approaches for specific diseases and multimorbidities associated with or impacted by ageing, with an aim to improve treatment options. This could include target discovery, pathway studies, biomarkers, and related early-stage research as well as later implementation and translation.
3. **Interdisciplinary Research:** Proposals that integrate diverse scientific disciplines to address complex ageing-related challenges, fostering innovation and comprehensive solutions. We encourage interdisciplinary work between medical and related scientific disciplines as well as more wide-ranging interdisciplinary collaboration between medicine and social science. Proposals can include a third collaborator with expertise in mental health, humanities, or

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community impact, adding value beyond medical research and addressing broader societal issues.

4. **Big Data, Deep Learning & AI:** Utilizing large datasets to uncover insights and trends related to ageing and age-related diseases, including populations studies, biomarkers and risk correlations, and longitudinal secondary data research, to enhance the understanding and management of these conditions.
5. **Translational and/or Personalised Medicine:** Projects that demonstrate a clear pathway from research to clinical testing or clinical application, with a focus on delivering practical, timely, and impactful benefits for older adults. This includes research on tailoring medical treatments to individual characteristics, needs, and preferences – ensuring more effective and personalised care. Proposals may involve innovation, seed funding, and startup support to develop and advance promising health technologies and treatments for healthy ageing, with the goal of commercial deployment and clinical translation.

Annex A: BIRAX Research Themes for Healthy Ageing

Eligible Subject Areas: The subject areas listed below define the **thematic scope** of this Call for Proposals. All submissions must fall within at least one of these areas to be considered eligible. These subject areas are broader in nature and ensure the call remains open to a wide range of relevant research, while maintaining coherence with the program's overarching goals.

As you'll note below, some partners have expressed their interest in specific Subject Areas. While their focus lays in that area, they may also be interested in such proposals where that area may be expressed under other Subject Areas of the call. Therefore, all such relevant proposals will be shared with the partners as appropriate.

1. **Age-related Multimorbidity:** In order to achieve healthy ageing, multiple ageing-related diseases should be mitigated by therapeutic interventions aimed at their underlying processes. According to this premise, we invite research toward diagnosis and treatment of multimorbidities, as prevalent in older people, and how different age-related diseases intersect or exacerbate one another to lead to more debilitating outcomes. We seek new approaches toward early diagnosis and prediction of old age multimorbidity and evaluation of the ageing process as a determinant for multimorbidity, utilizing diverse physiological, functional, genetic, epigenetic and other biomarkers and bioinformatics. We welcome proposals on new biomedical approaches for the prevention and alleviation of old age multimorbidity, with focus on pharmacological and regenerative medicine approaches. Of special interest is the development of evidence-based methods and criteria for the evaluation of the efficacy and safety of treatments against old-age multimorbidity.
2. **Cardiovascular Disease:** We welcome studies into the impact of ageing on cardiovascular disease, exploring new directions toward understanding mechanisms, diagnosis and treatment, including the potential application of regenerative therapies in the context of CVD and strategies to enhance cardiovascular capacity in ageing physiologies. We welcome research across the broad spectrum of age-related heart and circulatory diseases, including stroke and vascular dementia.
3. **Ageing and Diabetes:** This strand is focused on how the ageing process impacts on the progression of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, including, but not limited to: understanding the fundamental biological and physiological mechanisms, changes in beta cell regenerative capacity and, in the case of Type 1 diabetes, antigenicity; regeneration of beta cells and the prevention of their destruction; maintaining the survival of extant and newly generated beta cells; restoration of insulin secretion; developing technologies to efficiently generate pancreatic islet cells from non-beta-cell sources and to protect them by cellular engineering and/or encapsulation technology. Understanding and addressing the challenges presented by ageing with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, including polypharmacy, menopause, accurate diagnosis, precision medicine,

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appropriate glycaemic targets, the impact of de-escalation of drugs, and the use of technology (such as challenges in using glucose management technologies with reduced manual dexterity or other health challenges, including dementia). The emphasis should be on strategies to diagnose, prevent and treat effectively with the scope to improve quality of life for people with diabetes.

Projects funded under this strand may be funded in collaboration with, but not limited to, our partners, [BreakthroughT1D \(formerly JDRF\)](#) and [Diabetes UK](#).

4. **Neurodegenerative Diseases:** This strand investigates the impact of the ageing process on the development and progression of neurodegenerative conditions, the elucidation of new targets for prevention, diagnosis, disease-modifying and symptomatic therapeutics, as well as the potential of stem cell technology to better model and understand the underlying pathogenic processes or regenerative potential of the ageing nervous system. Neurodegenerative diseases include diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone disease, Parkinson's disease, and vision disorders, like age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma.

Projects funded under this strand may be funded in collaboration with, but not limited to, our partners, [MS Society](#), [Race Against Dementia](#), and [BrightFocus Foundation](#)

5. **Age-related Research Conditions Centred on Women:** We invite proposals for innovative studies focusing on conditions related to women and healthy ageing. We encourage proposals in reference to menopause, which is the obvious transition that is sex specific and could improve wellbeing of women. As women experience unique health challenges in later life, addressing these issues is critical for improving overall wellbeing and quality of life. We encourage proposals investigating age-related diseases with a particular or singular impact on women, such as breast and ovarian cancer, as well as conditions impacted by differing hormonal balances in women such as osteoporosis and menopause-related symptoms. We also seek research proposals focusing on widely experienced conditions of ageing such as cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndromes, cognitive decline, mental health conditions including depression and anxiety, and cancers without a sex-specific risk, which may be experienced differently in women. Differing levels of risk, symptoms and presentation in women often lead to worse outcomes or challenges around diagnosis and treatment. Hormonal changes, particularly the decline in estrogen during menopause, play a significant role in many of these conditions, influencing bone density, cardiovascular health, and cancer risks. Interdisciplinary approaches aimed at prevention, early detection, and interventions to enhance healthy ageing in women are especially welcome, particularly those that focus on exploring the intersection of ageing and chronic conditions such as diabetes, autoimmune diseases, and the impact of hormonal shifts on overall health.
6. **Age-related Frailty and Other Geriatric Syndromes:** We invite research toward enhanced diagnostic evaluation and therapy of old-age frailty, and other geriatric syndromes, including both specific geriatric syndromes, such as functional decline, pressure ulcers, incontinence, delirium and falls, as well as general systemic geriatric syndromes, such as metabolic syndrome,

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sarcopenia, maladaptation, respiratory syndrome and others. We invite studies exploring the specifics of diagnosis and therapy for older people, rather than non-specific “age-less” populations, with reference to specific medication dosages, regimens, drug interactions, long term effects and systemic dysregulation in people later in life. Research can be done on all levels, from the molecular and cellular to the systemic and include both pre-clinical and clinical effects but must show specific relevance for the ageing process and older people.

7. Interventions in Nutrition or Physical activity for Healthier Ageing

Studies focusing on wellbeing interventions and preventive measures to promote healthy ageing and prevent age-related diseases. Examining the entire lifespan to identify factors that contribute to lifelong health.

- a. **Physical Exercise and Nutrition:** Research on physical exercise and nutrition regimens, with a focus on personalisation of health regimens designed specifically for older persons in accordance with their health status, functional capacity and other diverse metrics of ageing processes.
- b. **Environmental Impact on Health:** Addressing the effects of environmental factors on health conditions and ageing. For example – how pollution and plastic exposure influence health conditions like dementia.
- c. **Diagnostics in Digital Health:** Innovating in digital health diagnostics to improve early detection and monitoring of health conditions in older persons.
- d. **Mental Health:** Investigating the impact of ageing on mental health, including prevention and treatment strategies to enhance psychological well-being in older adults.

Projects funded under this strand may be funded in collaboration with, but not limited to, our partners, [Diabetes UK](#), [BreakthroughT1D \(formerly JDRF\)](#) and [MS Society](#).

Invitation to Apply

Following the outlined research priorities and eligible subject areas, we invite interested researchers to submit proposals that align with the goals and scope of this Call. This is an opportunity to contribute to innovative research that addresses key challenges in the field and supports meaningful, real-world outcomes. We welcome submissions from both early-career and established researchers.

Preliminary proposals must be submitted by **Sunday, 1 March 2026 at 21:59 (UK) / 23:59 (IL)**.

For information on how to apply, please visit the British Council Israel's [Call for Proposals webpage](#).

Annex B: Indicative Call Timeline

Deadline for preliminary proposals	1 March 2026
Notification of Academic Selection Panel's shortlisted proposals	March 2026
Deadline for Full proposals	End of June 2026
Announcement of successful projects	December 2026