

£30m global cardiovascular challenge launched

~ British Heart Foundation to tackle the suffering and devastation caused by heart and circulatory diseases with historic research award ~



The British Heart Foundation (BHF) is today launching the [Big Beat Challenge](#), a unique research funding award that will bring together world-leading researchers and innovators to identify and solve any of the biggest problems in heart and circulatory disease.

Unveiled at this year's European Society of Cardiology Congress in Munich, the £30 million award will be one of the largest and most ambitious of its kind; a challenge to scientists, clinicians, innovators and entrepreneurs to look beyond incremental gains and accelerate breakthroughs that could transform lives across the globe.

For more than half a century, BHF-funded researchers have pioneered world-leading efforts to understand the causes of heart and circulatory diseases and develop new methods of prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Despite huge progress, the burden of heart and circulatory diseases continues to rise. Around the world, 18 million people die from heart and circulatory diseases each year. The WHO expects this to rise to 23 million by 2030.

The Big Beat Challenge will push the international research community to identify a real world challenge, significant unmet need or opportunity for game-changing innovation in heart and circulatory science or medicine. A problem or opportunity, which if solved or seized at scale, would mean major progress towards real patient benefit.

Proposals must be transformative, clinically relevant, and with a multi-disciplinary approach that couldn't be done without funding on this scale. Ideas could transform the lives of a few, or provide a smaller but important change for many.

The winning team can come from any country, sector or discipline, working on a scale above and beyond traditional research schemes to achieve a truly revolutionary breakthrough in any heart or circulatory disease.

The BHF is assembling an international, multi-disciplinary, expert advisory panel to oversee the Big Beat Challenge. A call for outline applications will open at the end of 2018 and close in mid-2019. Shortlisted applications with the most promising ideas will be given seed funding, and teams will then have around six months to develop their final proposals. These full applications will then be peer-reviewed and the winning research programme recommended by the panel.

Professor Sir Nilesh Samani, Medical Director at the BHF: "We've made great progress over the last 60 years in understanding and tackling many heart and circulatory diseases, and I am proud that BHF-funded research has made a substantial contribution to this success. But heart and circulatory diseases remain a major health problem worldwide, still causing 1 in 3 deaths globally.

“The time is right for a radical approach. With recent advances in areas all the way from genome editing to artificial intelligence, we have an unprecedented opportunity to exploit new ways of doing research that moves beyond incremental gains and accelerates breakthroughs.

“This will be one of the largest awards of its kind. It is without borders and without boundaries. The winning project will be truly transformative, and something that simply couldn’t happen without funding on this scale. The ideas can tackle any heart or circulatory condition using any approach. All we ask is that you think big.”

More information, including the full criteria for proposals, can be found online at bhf.org.uk/BigBeatChallenge

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Notes to editors

The Big Beat Challenge will launch at the ESC Congress in Munich, with the call for outline applications opening in late 2018. The window for applications will be open for around 6 months.

British Heart Foundation

The BHF is the UK’s largest independent funder of cardiovascular research, and one of the largest in the world. For almost 60 years, the BHF has pioneered life-saving research that has helped halve the number of deaths from heart and circulatory disease in the UK. The BHF also helps provide vital support and care for the 7 million people in the UK living with cardiovascular disease, along with information to help others reduce their risk and improve their heart health.

For more information, visit bhf.org.uk