

PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH and TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY BOARD

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PILOT PROCUREMENT SCHEME FOR SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT TARGETS INFECTIONS

- **The new Small Business Research Initiative opens its Health pilot competition, targeted at early stage businesses with technologies to tackle healthcare associated infections**
- **The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) will procure, on behalf of the Department of Health, up to £750,000 of development work per project, supporting development and testing prior to commercial procurement**

The pilot competition of the reformed Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) in the Department of Health is now open and will provide an opportunity to develop innovative technologies to address healthcare associated infections.

The new SBRI, which forms part of the Invention for Innovation programme supported by the National Institute for Healthcare Research, is a phased procurement programme, intended to deliver leading-edge technologies and products to meet the future needs of Government and its agencies ahead of commercial procurement. The programme will support technology developments through the critical stages of demonstration and trial. SBRI competitions are particularly targeted at early-stage, high-technology businesses. Developments are 100% funded and focused on specific identified needs, increasing the chance of exploitation.

Suppliers for each project will be selected by an open competition process and retain the intellectual property generated from the project, with certain rights of use retained by the Department of Health. This is an excellent opportunity to establish an early customer for a new technology and to fund its development.

The specific topics for this competition are:

- **Hand Hygiene.** We are looking for technologies for improving hand hygiene effectiveness, compliance or both, in hospital wards.
- **Pathogen detection in the hospital environment.** We are looking for a test for product residue that gives rapid results to facilitate immediate corrective action, yet is simple enough to be performed on the ward without the need for recourse to a laboratory.

Sally Davies, Director-General of Research and Development in the Department of Health said: “This is another step forward in our many-faceted programme to tackle healthcare associated infections – SBRI provides an opportunity to develop some highly innovative solutions for the NHS and we look forward to the results.”

The Technology Strategy Board's Chief Executive, Iain Gray, said: “SBRI addresses one of the most difficult stages of innovation – the development and testing of a new technology. A reformed SBRI will provide a programme that delivers both a vital support for early-stage businesses and a stream of innovations that deliver value for money in the public sector. This pilot is an important step and an excellent opportunity and we are very pleased to be working on it with the Department of Health.”

Notes to Editors

1. The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the government. Its mission is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life. It is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). For more information please visit www.innovateuk.org.
2. The reformed Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) is a specific programme for procurement of technology development projects by government departments. SBRI is being reformed following the recommendations of Lord Sainsbury in his report “Race to the Top” (October 2007), to focus on technology development and create a more structured programme. The present project in the Department of Health is one of two pilots, the other being in the Ministry of Defence.
3. Since July 2007 the Department of Health and NHS Purchase and Supply Agency have been working jointly to develop a broad-ranging Healthcare Associated Infections Technology Innovation Programme. This programme is seeking to speed up the development and adoption of technologies to further help combat healthcare associated infections, to identify which new technologies provide the best value and those which will have the most impact. The pilot will form another part of this overall Technology Innovation Programme. Focusing on technologies that are not presently commercially available, but could become available to the NHS within 3-5 years, it complements programmes such as Smart Solutions which focus on the evaluation of existing technologies.
4. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) provides the framework through which the research staff and research infrastructure of the NHS in England is positioned, maintained and managed as a national research facility. The NIHR provides the NHS with the support and infrastructure it needs to conduct first-class research funded by the Government and its partners alongside high-quality patient care, education and training. Its aim is to support outstanding individuals (both leaders and collaborators), working in world class facilities (both NHS and university), conducting leading edge research focused on the needs of patients. <http://www.nihr.ac.uk>. The NIHR invention for innovation (i4i) programme forms a part of the R&D strategy ‘Best Research for Best Health’ and more details on i4i can be found at the web address <http://www.nihr-ccf.org.uk/site/programmes/i4i>.

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