FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions: UK Research and Innovation Enhancing place-based partnerships in public engagement

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Update to ‘What co-investment is expected?’

This FAQs document will be a live document - updated as queries are received. Any changes made will be detailed in the main document with an alert notifying readers at the top of this document.

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General

Where does this funding come from?

In April 2019 the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) transferred responsibility for a package of public engagement programmes to UKRI. The funding available to projects from UKRI in this opportunity is derived from unallocated budget as a result of this transfer.

Who is eligible to apply?

Funding is available to all UK research organisations who are eligible to receive funding from UKRI¹. Only applications submitted through the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor or equivalent will be accepted.

How does this align to the UKRI Strength in Places Fund (SIPF)?

‘Place’ is an increasingly important principle for a range of policy interventions, particularly in supporting economic growth through research and innovation across the UK. UKRI is committed to investing to support growth across all parts of the UK to build on their research and innovation strengths. This includes the UKRI Strength in Places Fund (SIPF), which meets business needs through existing research strengths in order to drive local economic growth and productivity improvements. SIPF awards involve engaged participation with local leadership organisations and bids have been developed after consultation with local stakeholders.

Scope

What activities will UKRI fund?

UKRI expect that successful pathfinder projects will plan, develop and test a range of ways of working, co-created and in partnership with communities in their defined geography, towards long-term, embedded community and public engagement with research. Further details on the objectives of the fund (see paragraph 14) and the types of challenges that might be addressed (Annex B) can be found in the call guidance.

Funds may be used to support the scale-up of existing activities, new activities or partnership building activities.

How many individual projects will this fund support?

Research England, on behalf of UKRI, are aiming to make at least 15 awards.

¹ https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/
Is there a limit to the number of bids that a research organisation can lead, or be involved in?

Yes – a research organisation may only be the ‘lead organisation’ on one bid and a partner on one bid (i.e. a maximum of two bids in total), whether they are leading a separate bid or not.

We expect research organisations to identify their key strategic directions and collaborations that will have the biggest impact on the partnership and project as set out in the bid. It is not for UKRI to decide upon priority strategic objectives for research organisations. We expect collaborative consortia to clearly set out the rationale for the proposed activities, considering the most appropriate investment that supports these activities. Where multiple applications are made, we would expect those research organisations to have taken an overview at the institutional level to ensure that there had been some strategic prioritisation.

How many partner organisations can be involved in a bid?

There is no limit to the number of partner organisations that can be involved in a bid, whether that be research organisations or community organisations, as long as the minimum eligibility criteria is met (see paragraphs 24 – 34 of the call guidance). Bids must be set in the context of the existing research and innovation activity of the lead-research organisation(s) (and where applicable, partner research organisation), demonstrating how and where public engagement with research and innovation is of relevance and interest to the community / community partner(s).

Are letters of support from partners required?

Yes – see funding criteria requirements (paragraphs 35 – 39 in the call guidance).

What is expected in terms of co-creation?

UKRI expect bids to demonstrate appropriate consultation in the development of the project, defining clearly who and why the partners are involved and how their input helped to shape the approach. Further details on the types of challenges and activities that might be addressed can be found in Annex B of the call guidance.

In particular, the co-development of the bid and commitment to on-going collaboration of the community partner(s) / organisation(s) must be evidenced through a mandatory letter of support.

Define the geography – evidencing IMD alignment

UKRI expect bids to define the geography on which they will be focusing in reference to the partner(s) and wider stakeholder(s) with whom they are collaborating, for example, this geography could be defined in terms of a single street, a neighbourhood, ward or region.

Through this call UKRI aims to support engagement that works with community partner(s) / organisation(s) from the 40% most socioeconomically deprived areas of the UK, defined as those areas listed in the bottom two quintiles of the IMD for the respective part of the UK (see paragraph...
16 of the call guidance). Involvement of those areas outside of the bottom two quintiles may also be included as a secondary beneficiary, however, bids should clearly articulate how an equitable balance across the partners will be obtained. Proposals are expected to define the geography within which their project will focus and reference the relevant IMD.

**How do we define ‘anchor’ role or civic organisation?**

One definition of an ‘anchor institution’ is one that, alongside its main function, plays a significant and recognised role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy. A focus on place can be very important to universities in particular, both because it is a means to develop the ecosystem necessary for effective commercialisation, and because many universities seek to serve local economies and communities in their knowledge exchange, in their “anchor” roles.

A civic organisation is one that is seen as having strategic alignment with its place (region) and local population, be that in name, history, or in its reflection of the local labour market structure. It is an organisation whose drivers can, in part, be leveraged to the advantage of and serve local needs, including the local economy. Importantly, civic organisations can be viewed as being at their most effective when working in purposeful collaboration.

**Costing and Co-investment**

**Does a Full Economic Cost (fEC) policy apply?**

*Enhancing place-based partnerships in public engagement* is following the Research England approach to funding activities strategically and flexibly, taking account of opportunities to lever in co-investment, based on judgement of benefits. Instead, institutions should consider the financial sustainability of the activities for which they are requesting funding. All bids will be required to be fully costed and should set out the costs and the basis upon which they have been calculated. Research organisations should follow Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) principles, ensuring that total costs are reasonable.

**What are eligible costs for the UKRI investment?**

We expect the use of the funding to be resource in nature (e.g. staffing / studentships / fellowships, software, subscriptions, equipment under £10,000, travel, workshops / conferences). Bids must demonstrate why the level of UKRI investment requested is sufficient to result in an upward step-change in activity. Staff costs should reflect actual pay rates plus overheads incurred. All bids should set out the costs, and make the case for how different contributions (e.g. UKRI funding and co-investment) will cover these.

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3 https://www.trac.ac.uk/tracguidance/
This investment may not be used for capital (e.g. infrastructure, equipment over £10,000).

What co-investment is expected?

All UKRI public funding must spent between 2 December 2019 and 31 March 2020. The remaining two months of project duration, from 1 April 2020 to 29 May 2020, must be supported through evidenced match co-investment to the bid.

Therefore for each bid, UKRI requires a matched co-investment of a minimum of one-third of the funds requested from UKRI, and commensurate with continuing the project for the remaining two months of activity. This co-investment may be provided by the lead research organisation(s) exclusively or by some or all of the partner organisations and the research organisation(s) leading the bid. Co-investment should be cash or in-kind and could take a number of forms (see examples in paragraph 39f of the call guidance).

For example, where a project requests £15,000 of UKRI funding, match co-investment of a minimum of £5,000 (cash or in-kind) should be sourced – this is a total of £20,000 for delivery of the project over six months. Section 4 of the bid template should detail the £15,000 requested from UKRI and Section 5 should detail the £5,000 match co-investment.

Is co-investment weighted, so that a higher contribution will be looked upon more favourably?

No. The eligibility and funding criteria are set out at paragraphs 24 – 39 of the call guidance. Consortia should consider and propose the most appropriate co-investment to support their activities.

Award Letters

How will the cash flow move between partners?

Funding will be allocated via a single award letter to a lead partner(s) and it is expected that the lead partner(s) will distribute and manage funds across the partners. In particular, the lead partner(s) should ensure that adequate budget is made available to community partners, and that provision for access to that budget is simple and transparent⁴.

How will you award funding?

The lead partner(s) of the project will be the grant recipient and issued with a grant letter from UKRI. The lead partner(s) will be responsible for establishing appropriate governance procedures and structures to distribute funding amongst the collaborative partners.

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Bids should request a minimum of £10,000 and a maximum of £40,000 from UKRI to support proposed activities. All UKRI public funding must be spent between 2 December 2019 and 31 March 2020.

Post-award Support

What support programme will UKRI put in place for all funded projects?

UKRI have invited the National Coordination Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) to provide coordination for *Enhancing place-based partnerships in public engagement* focussed on supporting research organisations and community organisations to work together to engage with research and innovation specifically in areas where participation is low.

The role of the support programme is to:

- share and consolidate learning across all practice areas, organisations and partners in order to enhance practice;
- create sector relevant online resources to inform others wanting to develop their approach;
- establish monitoring and evaluation structures at project and programme level;
- provide insights that UKRI can use in developing their approach to delivering their strategy to improve participation in research and innovation from under-served groups.

Two coordination meetings will be convened over the six month award period to which project lead partner(s) attendance is mandatory, with the option to include at least one other partner representative. These meetings will take place on Thursday 6 February 2020 and Tuesday 28 April 2020.

What support programme will UKRI put in place for all eligible but unfunded projects?

UKRI have also invited the NCCPE to support projects that are unsuccessful in achieving funding, basing the programme one similar to that delivered during the RCUK SEE-PER programme.

Unsuccessful projects will be invited to select from a range of opportunities to support their work to engage areas of the UK experiencing significant disadvantage in its different forms. They will be offered a list of options and asked to prioritise which of these best meets their needs, with a deadline to express a preference. Support choices will include:

- Residential ‘hot-house’ sessions;
- Networking and capacity building;
- Mentor support;
- Access to the Engage Academy;
- Consultancy.