



NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have [feedback](#) or would like to [help us test new developments](#).

# NERC large grant

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Award range:</b>	£1,200,000 - £3,700,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	20 September 2020
<b>Opening date:</b>	2 December 2019
<b>Closing date:</b>	17 November 2020 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 21 October 2020*

[Start application](#)

This funding opportunity supports innovative, large-scale and complex projects that tackle big science questions and have the potential to produce world-leading research. Your project must be predominantly within our remit, although we will fund research that crosses over into other research council areas.

You can apply if you are a research group or individual based at a UK university or other approved institution. Funding of between £1.2 million and £3.7 million (at 100% full economic cost) is available for projects lasting up to five years. We will fund 80% of your project's full economic cost.

[Open all](#)

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## Who can apply

You can apply if you are a research group or individual. To be eligible as a principal investigator you must be:

- resident in the UK
- employed by an eligible UK research organisation (higher education institution, research council institute or a recognised independent research organisation)
- employed at lecturer level (or equivalent) or above.

We encourage multidisciplinary research and collaborations with other UK organisations. International and non-academic collaborators can be involved as project partners.

[Find out more about eligibility in our research grants and fellowships handbook \(PDF, 755KB\).](#)

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## What we're looking for

As a researcher, you can submit a proposal in any area of environmental science that interests you provided that it is predominantly within [our remit](#):

- archaeology
- atmospheric physics and chemistry
- climate and climate change
- ecology, biodiversity and systematics
- genetics and development
- geosciences
- marine environments
- medical and health interface
- microbial sciences
- omic sciences and technologies
- planetary science
- plant and crop science
- pollution, waste and resources
- terrestrial and freshwater environments
- tools, technology and methods.

We also welcome multidisciplinary proposals that cross into other research council areas.

We're looking for proposals that can support pure, applied, technology-led or policy-driven research but still address – or provide the means to address – clearly-defined scientific questions.

We expect that the research projects we fund will have the potential to be world-leading.

Large research projects must tackle big science questions. To achieve this, they will often involve multidisciplinary approaches. We expect your proposal to show several interdependent components (we call these work packages) interacting in a single overall structure.

We will usually fund costs at 80% full economic cost, apart from equipment which will be funded at 100%:

- directly-incurred costs such as staff payroll, travel and subsistence and consumables
  - equipment
  - directly-allocated costs such as investigators' salaries, estates costs and shared resources
  - indirect costs such as research organisation administration.
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## How to apply

We encourage you to contact us at an early stage if you have any questions about your eligibility or the application process. We can also give you advice on the best funding route for your proposed research project.

## Outline proposals

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#). When applying select 'New document', then:

- council: NERC
- document type: outline proposal
- scheme: NERC outline [date]

We recommend you start your application early. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.

You can find advice on completing your application in the [Je-S handbook](#).

If you need further help, you can contact the Je-S help desk on 01793 444164 or by email [jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org).

Your host organisation will be able to provide advice and guidance on completing your application.

Your outline proposal should include a case for support comprising:

- objectives and anticipated outputs
- an outline of the research proposed and its international context
- justification for why a large grant is more appropriate than several standard grants
- details of the composition and experience of the research team
- the role of project partners and co-funding (both proposed and secured)
- an outline of your project management and data management plans
- your proposed use of any NERC facilities
- details of equipment you will be requesting
- references.

You can submit an outline proposal up to six weeks before the closing date.

## Full proposals

If we accept your outline proposal, we will invite you to submit a full proposal at least four months before the closing date.

You must submit your full proposal through the Je-S system. Select:

- council: NERC
- document type: standard proposal
- scheme: large grant [date]

Your proposal must include:

- a case for support
- an outline data management plan
- justification of resources
- CVs for all applicants and named research staff.

If relevant, you should also include:

- a letter of support from any named project partner
- a technical assessment
- details of non-UK components, for example, if you are collaborating with an international partner
- quotations for items of equipment over £25,000.

If your project involves collaboration with several research organisations, you can submit a joint proposal. There is no limit on the number of organisations that can take part. We will expect the lead institution to act as coordinator, but other partners may submit separate proposals through Je-S as part of the overall project.

For more information:

- read our [research grants and fellowships handbook \(PDF, 755KB\)](#).
- contact the research grants team on [researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org).

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## How we will assess your application

### Outline proposals

A panel of experts from the [Peer Review College](#) will assess all outline proposals. We may also bring in independent experts, as needed. We will assess proposals against the following criteria:

- how appropriate your proposed scientific challenge is for large grant funding
- the strength of your proposed management arrangements.

We usually approve around 20% of all proposals at this stage. We will provide feedback on your proposal.

We will let you know if you are invited to submit a full proposal at least four months before the closing date.

[Read more about our pre-award assessment criteria.](#)

## Full proposals

If we approve your outline proposal, we will invite you to submit a full proposal. External experts will assess this and we will reject your proposal at this stage if it receives consistently low scores.

If approved, you will have the opportunity to respond to their comments before NERC's large grants interview panel assesses your full proposal.

This panel will include members of the Peer Review College and independent experts, as needed. We will invite you to make a presentation to the panel and answer questions to help with the assessment process. The panel usually meets in March and we will let you know the date as soon as it is set.

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## Contact details

Research grants team: [researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org)

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## Additional info

NERC has agreements with other funders such as the National Science Foundation and São Paulo Research Foundation. This can make it easier for UK researchers to collaborate with research partners around the world by removing the risk that a proposed project will receive funding in one country but not in another.

[Find out more about our international funding agreements.](#)

## Supporting documents

- [Research grants and fellowships handbook \(PDF, 755KB\)](#)
- [Approved research council institutes \(PDF, 17KB\)](#)
- [Approved independent research organisations \(PDF, 26KB\)](#)

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## Timeline

### ○ 2 December 2019

Opening date for outline proposals

- **10 March 2020 16:00**  
Closing date for outline proposals
- **1 July 2020**  
Invitation to submit a full proposal
- **17 November 2020 16:00**  
Closing date for full proposals (invited only)
- **March 2021**  
Review panel decision

## Related content

[Our research areas](#)

[Proposal assessment process](#)