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# Digital Economy NetworkPlus Webinar



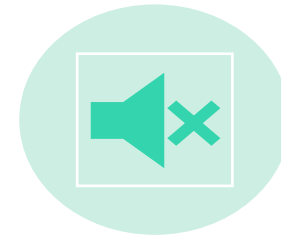
WELCOME



START AT 10.00



SPEAKER VIEW



MUTE WHEN  
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EDIT NAME TO  
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ORGANISATION



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# Digital Economy NetworkPlus Webinar

27<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Stephanie Dey

Afia Masood

An abstract graphic composed of several thin, red, hand-drawn style lines. Some lines are horizontal or slightly angled, while others are more vertical, creating a sense of movement or a stylized 'X' or 'Z' shape. The lines are scattered across the lower half of the slide, with some overlapping the teal box.

[digitaleconomy@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:digitaleconomy@epsrc.ukri.org)

Sign up to the Digital Economy Theme newsletter:  
<https://epsrc.ukri.org/newsevents/alerts/>

# Agenda



10.00 Welcome and Presentation



10.45 Panel Session



12.00 Optional Networking



13.00 Meeting Closes

# Digital Economy Theme



## Vision:

To rapidly realise the transformational impact of digital technologies on aspects of community life, cultural experiences, future society, and the economy by promoting and supporting high-quality, applied, cross-disciplinary, adventurous research and training.



***“Technology alone is not enough. It’s technology married with liberal arts, married with humanities, that yields the results that make our hearts sing”***

*- Steve Jobs, 2011*

# Digital Economy Theme - overview

- Sociotechnical research at interface of ICT and social sciences (at least 50% in EPSRC remit)
- Research Council Partners: EPSRC, AHRC, ESRC and NERC
- Collaboration with Innovate UK and Digital Catapult
- Coordination with Government Departments e.g. DCMS, DFID, DFIT, Cabinet Office, Home Office and security-relevant agencies (NCSC/GCHQ, DSTL, Met Police etc.)

## Research we support

- Technical, but people/user focused
- Multi/interdisciplinary, applied research
- Co-creation with users (society, business and/or government)



# Digital Economy Priorities

## Five priorities

- Refreshed in 2020 through engagement with members of the DE community at a workshop, and consultation with the DE PAB, including members of ICT SAT and broader ICT community
1. Trust, Identity, Privacy and Security (TIPS)
  2. Content Creation and Consumption (CCC)
  3. Beyond a Data-Driven Economy (BBDE)
  4. Sustainable Digital Society (SDS)
  5. Equitable Digital Society (EDS)



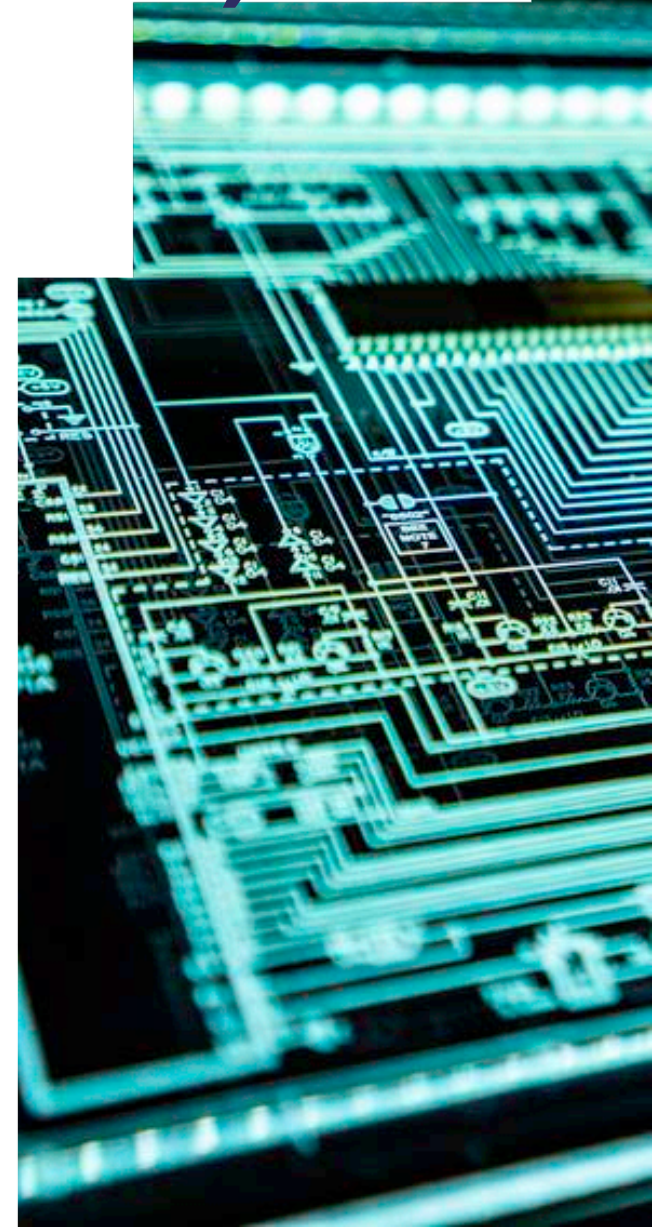
# Trust, Identity, Privacy & Security (TIPS)

## Focus

- Cybersecurity and data protection in complex, pervasive, highly connected digital systems at all scales, from individual users to industrial and government infrastructures.

## Research questions

- How do we trade off transparency and accountability with privacy and security?
- How do we protect the interests of the individual, while enabling new commercial and societal opportunities for innovation?
- How can new technologies be built to fight crime in a digital context?





# Content Creation and Consumption (CCC)

## Focus

- Creation and consumption of digital media, games, and interactive software, and the wider application of digital creativity techniques and technologies, including augmented reality, animation, immersive technologies, music and acoustic technology, across many domains.

## Research questions

- How can we realise the full impact potential of existing digital creativity techniques?
- What are the opportunities for using mixed reality, generative AI and responsive media, for research in the creative economy and more widely?





# Beyond a Data-Driven Economy (BBDE)

## Focus

- The impacts and opportunities that the data-driven economy will have on individuals, businesses and governments; looking at decentralisation of the digital economy and digital business models.

## Research questions

- How does the proliferation of data impact the individual, the world of work, and the private sector?
- How can data analytics be implemented to aid business strategies?
- What is the potential of using decentralised platforms underpinned by trusted data for transport, supply chains or creative industries?



# Sustainable Digital Society (SDS)

## Focus

- The use of digital technologies to address anthropogenic environmental impacts and improve environmental sustainability, whilst considering the impacts of the digital technologies themselves.

## Research questions

- How can novel digital technologies be used to shift patterns of consumption and foster more sustainable ways of living and economic arrangements?
- How can we explore the tensions between the push for increasing digitalisation and the associated energy costs and environmental impacts?
- How can digital technologies be made sustainable end-to-end?



# Equitable Digital Society (EDS)

## Focus

- Addressing issues of social division and inequality within the digital economy; promoting the co-creation and design of appropriate digital technologies and services that will support a fairer, more inclusive society.

## Research questions

- How can technology be used to make socioeconomic life fairer?
- How can we ensure that data-driven/algorithmic decision-making does not result in prejudice and discrimination?
- How can digital technologies address the challenges of equitable adoption and use of technology across societies i.e. the “digital divide”?





# NetworkPlus

- A network which brings together a wide range of Digital Economy stakeholders to share knowledge, build a community, identify research priorities and opportunities and kick-start collaborative research activities
- Why NetworkPlus? More than a standard EPSRC network – includes funding for a wide range of activities

# Digital Economy NetworkPlus call

- Each proposal must fit to **only one** of the Digital Economy Theme priority areas:
  - beyond a data driven economy
  - content creation and consumption
  - equitable digital society
  - sustainable digital society
  - trust, identity, privacy and security.
- We expect each NetworkPlus to:
  - broadly cover the whole of **one** priority area,
  - enable a step change in the way stakeholders engage and interact.
- This is an open and competitive process open to all that fulfil eligibility requirements
- **No** requirement for the NetworkPlus to align to manufacturing of the future theme priorities.



# Aims of the Digital Economy NetworkPlus call



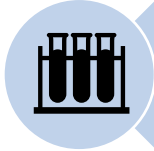
build new communities or create new links between different existing communities



bring focus to the relevant research area, identifying research challenges, opportunities, and priorities



improve knowledge exchange



support initial testing of new ideas and kick-start new collaborations



grow the areas of research for the benefit of the UK

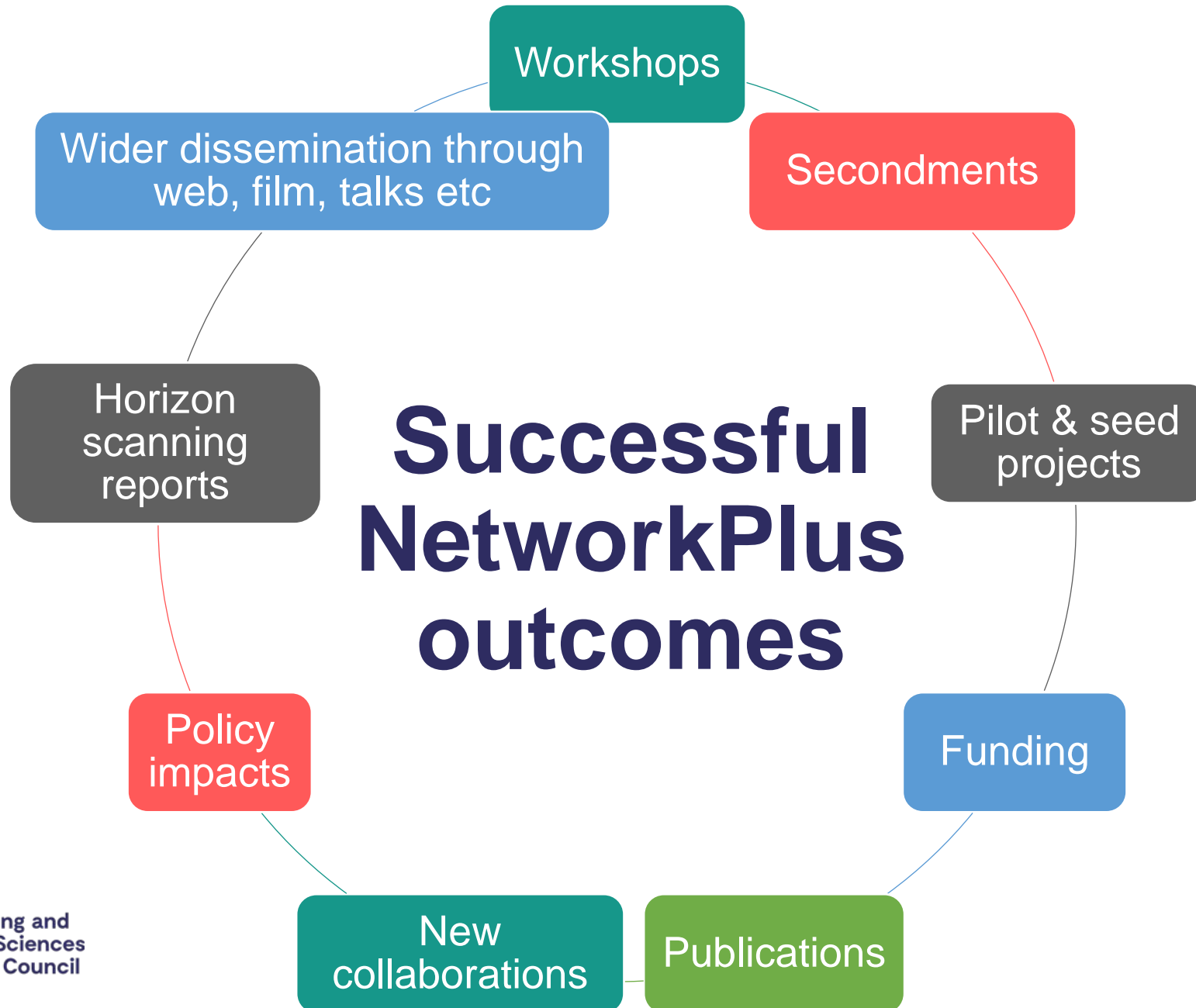


facilitate impact and advance policy



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# Key lessons learnt from previous NetworkPlus

- a clear, well-defined topic for the network is needed to focus plans and activities
- sufficient administrative and host university support
- different scales of feasibility study funding are appropriate for different research topics or disciplines
- different scales of feasibility study may require different assessment processes to reflect the value that is being requested
- expectation and arrangements for full economic costing of network activities need to be clear across all parties
- advertising of events needs to be included in the budget
- long-term plans for the legacy and sustainability of the network need to be considered early on.

# Funding Available

£13M (80% FEC) to support five NetworkPlus for 48-60 months

- Up to five investigator salaries
- Travel and subsistence
- Administrative support
- Research (feasibilities studies)
- Equipment for communication, networking and events
- Organisation of activities

## Activities

- to identify and disseminate key research challenges in the area, for example horizon-scanning studies
- to facilitate impact and advance policy, such as reports, websites and briefings
- for secondment support, including scoping of potential opportunities, travel and subsistence etc.
- to support career development
- to connect users, industry and other stakeholders with the research base

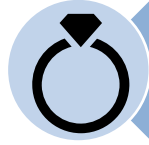
# Additional Grant Conditions



Fixed start date for TIPS network



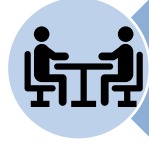
Community network expectations



User engagement strategy



Equality diversity and inclusion



Independent advisory board



Annual progress reports

# Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Weightings
Fit to call	Primary
Quality	Primary
Applicant and partnerships	Secondary
Resources and management	Secondary



# Fit to call (primary)

- strength of **alignment to one** of the digital economy theme priority areas
- potential to stimulate the development of **emerging research areas** and **build research collaborations**
- potential to **identify ambitious ‘real world’ research challenges** within their priority areas between users and academia
- potential for the network to **advance the UK’s capabilities** in the selected digital economy theme priority area, as well as the UK’s economy and society
- extent to which the Network Plus **complements other UK funded research activities** and existing networks in the area, including any relationship to the EPSRC portfolio
- **sustainability of the activity** after the lifetime of the grant.

# Quality (primary)

- the **ambition, adventure, transformative aspects** or potential outcomes
- the **suitability of the proposed membership and activities.** Applicants are encouraged to tailor their activities to the need of the area and be innovative in their approach. Activities should reflect the aims of the opportunity
- **appropriate engagement and dissemination plans** to accelerate impact and **form an agenda for future research in the area**

# Applicant and partnerships (secondary)

The ability to deliver the proposed project, making reference to:

- **track record of the PI** in relevant research, leadership and management of complex activities
- evidence of thought leadership, responding to strategic and policy drivers
- **sufficient administrative support** for managing the NetworkPlus
- **appropriate range of expertise** of core NetworkPlus members
- appropriateness of the track record of the applicant(s)
- **evidence of user engagement, co-creation and support** (financial cash or in-kind) and ability to engage with users
- **evidence of host institution support**, specifically focusing on support given to the applicant team in managing the NetworkPlus budget, commissioning feasibility funds and on-going governance to ensure correct usage and accountability.

# Resources and management (secondary)

The effectiveness of the proposed planning and management and whether the requested resources are appropriate and have been fully justified, making reference to:

- the **appropriateness of the requested resources**
- the **effectiveness of the proposed management structure and plans**
- **appropriateness of the commissioning of funds for feasibility studies and on-going governance to ensure correct usage and accountability**
- appropriate resources have been requested to support **community building, responsible innovation and public engagement.**

# Full Proposal Check List

Case for support  
(8 pages)

Comprising up to two A4 sides for a track record, and 6 A4 sides describing proposed research and its context.

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Workplan  
(1 page)

Details key milestones

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Justification for  
resources  
(2 pages)

Narrative description of the need for resources requested.

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# Full Proposal Check List (cont.)

## Host letter of support

Recognition of the fact that host organisation will be responsible for administering the grant for these national networks on behalf of all NetworkPlus partners and members

Details of specific support that will be given to the applicant team in managing the NetworkPlus budget, commissioning the funds and ongoing governance.

## CVs

Only for named postdoctoral staff, researcher co-investigators and visiting researchers

## Project partner letter for support

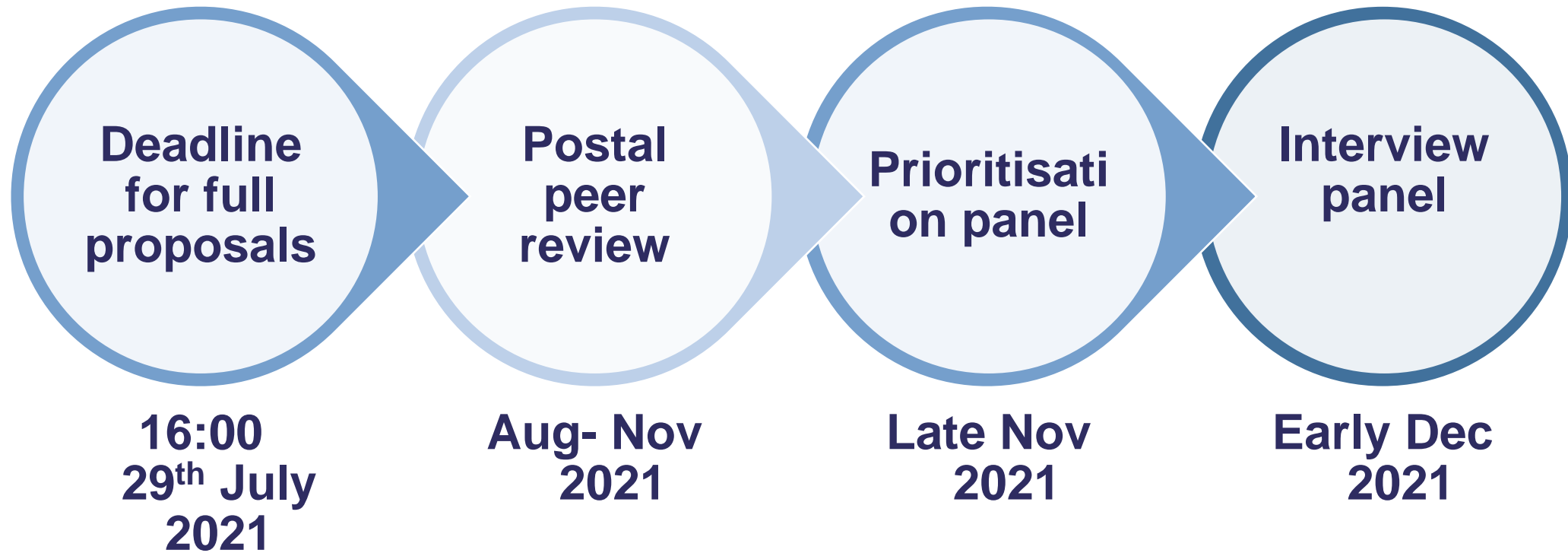
Must be included from all named project partners. Must be on headed paper, and be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission.

## Letter of support

Only permitted in exceptional circumstances that do not meet the requirement for project partner letter of support



# Key Dates



# Key Points

**ONE**

Broadly cover whole of ONE Digital Economy theme priority areas



We want to see creativity and innovation in your approach



Administration support is vital

# Panel

- Clara Crivellaro, Not- Equal
- Simon Pearson, Internet of Food Things
- Natalie Theodoulou, SPRITE +
- Zena Wood, Digitally Enhanced Advanced Services



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# Thank you

Contact us: [digitaleconomy@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:digitaleconomy@epsrc.ukri.org)

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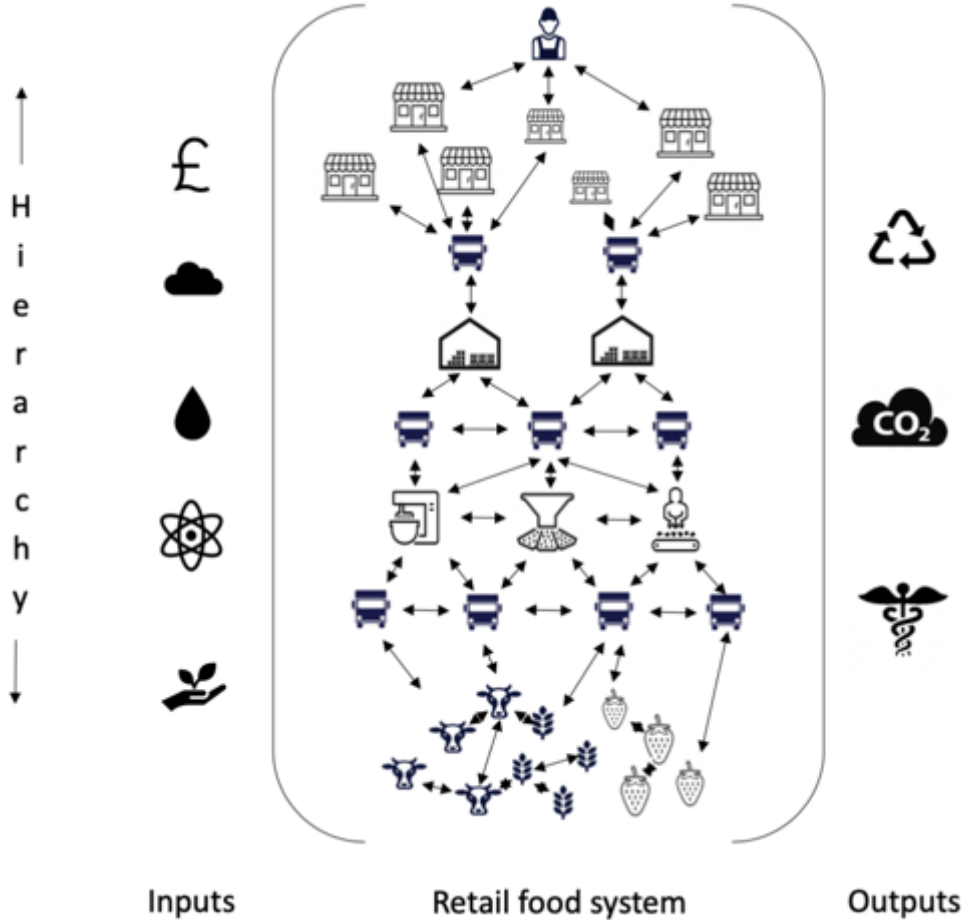
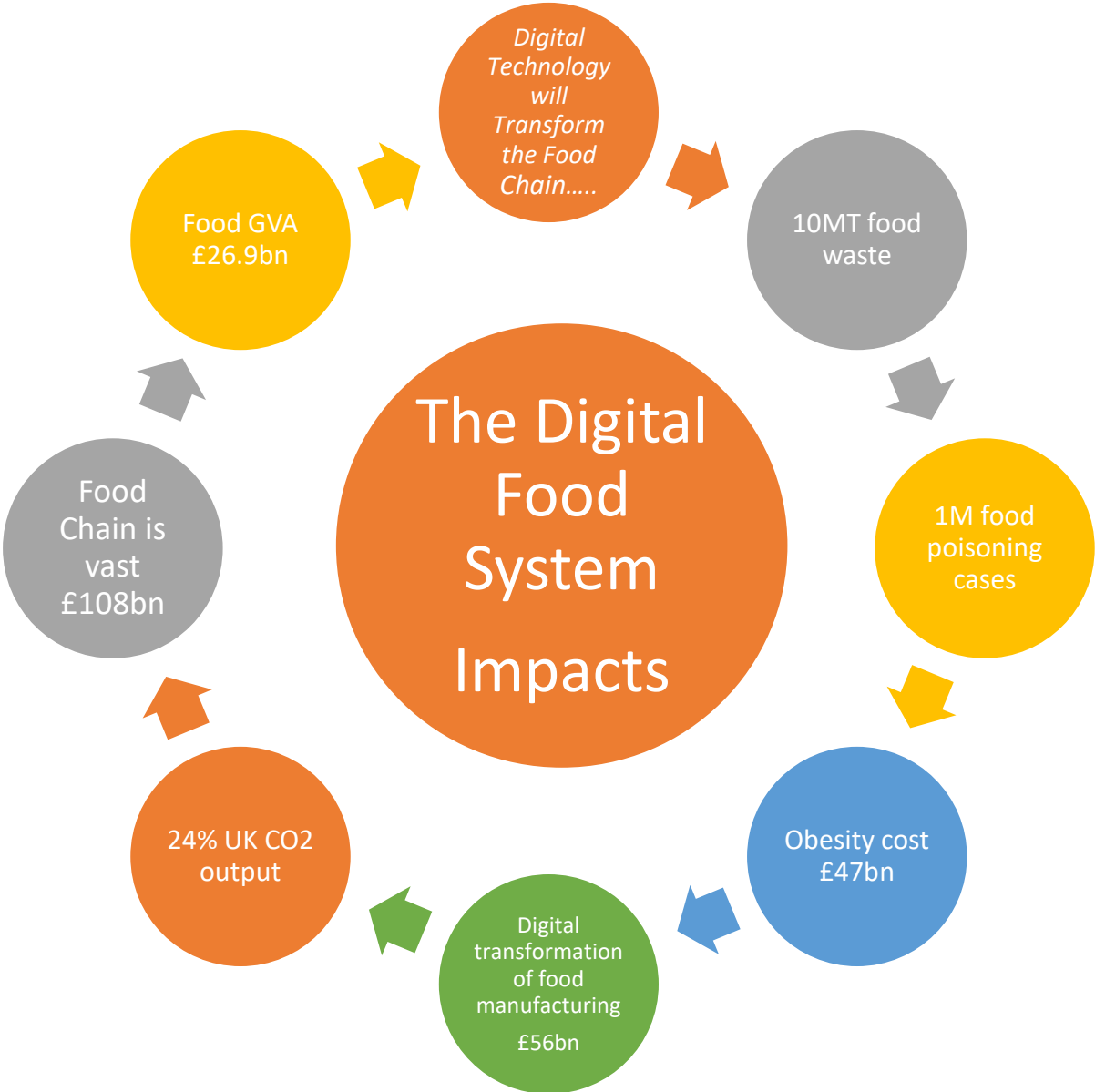
# Digitalisation of the food production system



**Internet of  
Food Things**  
Network Plus



# Impacts & motivation



The Network was established to help address a range of high-level challenges

How to transfer data across a very complex system..?



# My lessons...

1. Network Plus's are champions of all forms of diversity
2. Promote ECR's
3. Be responsive to the community
4. Diversity is enhanced by using a range of interventions;
  1. Sandpits
  2. Retreats
  3. Grants
  4. Conferences and networking events
  5. Engage multiple stakeholders, take an outward open look...
  6. Encourage new ways of working and
5. It is NOT a research project, it develops people, teams and diversity



Security, Privacy, Identity, Trust,  
Engagement, NetworkPlus

Find out more:

 [spritehub.org](https://spritehub.org)

 [admin@spritehub.org](mailto:admin@spritehub.org)

 [@spriteplus](https://twitter.com/spriteplus)

SPRITE+ is...

- A vehicle for engagement and collaboration between academic and non-academic communities.
- A 'network of networks', making connections with and between other relevant interest groups.
- Supporting innovative small projects that could be the game changers of tomorrow.
- Gathering stakeholder requirements and exploring existing research, to identify the gaps and propose new research directions.
- Supporting the development of the next generation of researchers.



# APPROACH TO NETWORK+ MANAGEMENT

Organisation, planning and prioritisation

Flexible, responsive and inclusive

Clear, effective and positive communication

A good 'all rounder' with an understanding of HEI processes

Contacts with research, finance, procurement, contracts, communications, business engagement



# OPPORTUNITIES

Work with other networks/hubs/centres e.g. collaborative activities, support network

Use Advisory Board meetings to ask specific questions rather than as a reporting mechanism

Make use of social media e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn

Collect feedback from network members



# PITFALLS AND LESSONS LEARNT

Don't underestimate how much work it takes to run a Network+

Administrative support is vital

Don't underestimate the time taken for research contracts

Importance of clarity in funding call documents e.g. fEC criteria – otherwise lots of questions!