

# ADR UK Synthetic Data call 2023

## *Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) guidance for applicants*

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### 1. Funding opportunity summary

ESRC and Administrative Data Research UK (ADR UK) invites applications to evaluate the use of low-fidelity synthetic versions of datasets held securely within the UK Data Service (UKDS), Office for National Statistics (ONS) Secure Research Service (SRS), and other trusted research environments (TREs).

The successful team will produce a public report addressing the objectives of the funding opportunity. The full economic cost of the grant can be up to £375,000. ESRC, ADR UK, and

UKRI Digital Research Infrastructure funds will cover 80% of the full economic cost (up to £300,000). We would expect project proposals to be for 18 to 24 months in duration.

The deadline to apply is 9 May 2023 at 16:00.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Deadline for applications:</b> | 9 May 2023 at 16:00  |
| <b>Funding Opportunity type:</b>  | Invitation for proposals   |
| <b>Funding available:</b>         | Up to £375,000 (100% full economic cost) over 18-24 months               |
| <b>How to apply:</b>              | Proposals are invited via Je-S using the standard 80% FEC funding model. |

## 2. Quick application links

| Form title                           | Link                            |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Je-S form (ADR UK grant application) | <a href="#">Je-S site login</a> |

## 3. Assessment process

Once accepted, following basic office checks, proposals will be sent to a panel of independent expert reviewers. If demand is high or there are conflicts of interest, additional reviewers may be approached. Reviewers will represent academic and non-academic experts, including data owners, other government or public service representatives, and a public contributor. Applications will be reviewed and scored by at least two reviewers based on the criteria in the Funding Finder advertisement.

### 3.1. Key commissioning dates

- Deadline for Je-S proposals: 9 May 2023 at 16:00
- Decision to fund communicated: July 2023

*For successful applicants only:*

- Latest grant start date: 15 September 2023

## 4. Introduction

This guidance is created to assist applicants to this scheme in the completion of their proposal. It is specific to this scheme and should be used in conjunction with the following information:

- [ESRC's research funding guide](#)
- ESRC guidance on ['How to write a good research grant proposal'](#)

- **Je-S help text** is available in every page of your Je-S form, simply click on the question mark against any section (or on the word 'Help' in the top right-hand corner of each page)
- Je-S helpdesk (for all Je-S system enquiries): [jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org) / 01793 444164.

If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, helpdesk staff are currently working remotely via email. If phone assistance is required, a call back can be provided. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays and other holidays).

- When reporting problems by email or telephone, please give your name, organisation and user id, the date and time, what part of the form or system you were working on, and the nature of the problem.
- Scheme-specific guidance: See the Funding Finder announcement page

**Important:** Where information and guidance issued in this document differs from the general guidance offered in the above sources, you should adhere to the guidance in this document.

## 5. Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S)

All proposals under this Funding Opportunity must be completed and submitted through the Je-S system. To be able to do this the organisation must be registered for Je-S, and the applicants must hold Je-S accounts.

### 5.1. *Je-S registration for organisations*

UK higher education institutions and some other independent UK research organisations are already **recognised institutions** on Je-S. A list of these organisations is available via the [UKRI website](#) and from the Je-S login page.

### 5.2. *Je-S accounts for applicants*

All principal and co-investigators must have a Je-S account which has been verified by a third party before they can be found in searches within the Je-S System and added as an applicant. To get you started on creating an account please refer to the [Je-S helptext](#).

[Use of your personal information](#) – UKRI capture and process personal information in line with current data protection legislation; General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any amendments by the UK Data Protection Bill and/or relevant acts of parliament.

### 5.3. *Before creating your proposal*

Research proposals may **only** be made on UKRI's Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S).

Please note that there is a further layer of administration between your submission of the application and the application being submitted to the ESRC via Je-S. Your application will actually be sent to the ESRC from the submitter pool at your organisation. The organisation's

submission route usually includes both an approver (i.e. head of department) and submitter pool (i.e. central finance office), and the ESRC *cannot* accept responsibility for any delay which may occur as a consequence. We strongly advise applicants to secure confirmation from their relevant administrator that the application has been successfully submitted to the Je-S team (see also section 5.10 'Tracking Your Proposal').

The deadline for research organisation submission of proposals is 9 May 2023 at 16:00. **You should allow sufficient time for completion of the research organisation submission process checks/authorisation.**

#### 5.4. *Creating your proposal*

To create your proposal:

1. Log in to Je-S at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>
2. From the 'Home' screen, select 'Documents', then select 'New Document'
3. On the 'Add new document' screen, select 'Funding Opportunity search' (highlighted at top of screen). When prompted type in the Funding Opportunity title 'Operationalising scaled production and sharing of synthetic data 2023' and select from the list created. The remaining three selection fields will be automatically populated
4. Select the 'Create Document' button.

Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the proposal document is created and submitted against the correct Funding Opportunity (and consequently correct scheme). **We will not accept proposals that are not submitted using the above Funding Opportunity route.**

#### 5.5. *Completing your proposal*

The initial Je-S document instructions page will give you general guidance on the navigation layout, specifically icon descriptions.

The left-hand column 'Document Menu' lists all the sections associated with this Funding Opportunity and clearly identifies which ones are mandatory (a red cross, turning to a green tick when completed).

The details below are not exhaustive step-by-step guidance, and we recommend that you refer to the [Je-S helptext](#) for additional information.

Please note you may return to edit saved documents at any time before submission.

##### ***Project details***

- Select organisation and department from drop-down lists (e.g. the research organisation where the grant will be held)
- 'Your Reference' should be supplied by your research organisation (consult your Research Office). If your administration office does not have a system for referencing grant proposals, a suitable reference of your own choice will be acceptable. Use 'Your reference' to help distinguish easily between proposals in users' 'Current Documents'

lists. The reference is intended to be a unique identifier for the proposal, and is unrelated to the reference that the organisation would be asked to provide if a grant were awarded.

- Enter Project Title (maximum limit of 150 characters)
- For Proposal Funding Opportunity, select '*Operationalising scaled production and sharing of synthetic data 2023*'. Please note that the option will only be available once the Funding Opportunity is live (this may have already been pre-populated into the form)
- The latest grant start date is 15 September 2023. Your grant should be a proposed duration of no more than 24 months
- It is recommended that once this initial section is completed, check the submission path (via the 'Document Actions' tab) to see if the proposal has to be signed off by submitters and approvers. If it does, please make sure they will be available to process the document on the day you intend to submit it.

### ***Applicant***

Enter the name of the principal investigator (PI) and any co-investigators (Co-I) if applicable.

Investigators may be from more than one research organisation, but the PI must be from the organisation that will administer the grant. The PI will take intellectual leadership of the project and manage the research; this individual will be the contact person for ESRC correspondence. All named investigators are responsible for ensuring that successful proposals are undertaken and completed in the manner specified.

For further detailed guidance on these roles and how to enter details on the Je-S form please access the [Je-S helptext](#).

### ***Post will outlast project***

Select 'Yes' or 'No'. Please note, there is an expectation that the PI's post will be in place for the duration of a funded project. This means if this question is answered with 'No' then a pop-up message will display, confirming that if the proposal is successful it is the research organisation's responsibility to ensure the PI's post will be extended to match the project end date. By submitting the proposal, the research organisation is taking collective responsibility to comply with this request.

### ***Third party data protection***

Applicants must ensure that they have obtained the permission of any other person named on the proposal form (such as any Co-Investigators or Project Partners) for the provision of their personal information to UKRI and the processing of their data by UKRI for the purpose of assessing the application and management of any funding awarded.

### ***Objectives***

List the objectives of your research. (4000 character limit)

### ***Summary***

Provide a plain English summary of the research you propose to carry out in a language that could be publicised to a general, non-academic audience. Please note that this section will be

made available on the [Gateway to Research](#) database, therefore applicants should ensure confidential information is not included. (4000 character limit)

### ***Academic beneficiaries***

Please summarise how your proposed research will contribute to knowledge, both within the UK and globally. Please list any academic beneficiaries from the research and give details of how they will benefit and how the results of the proposed research will be disseminated. (4000 character limit)

Please note that this section may be published to demonstrate the impact of UKRI-funded research. Please ensure confidential information is not included in this section. For further detailed guidance please access the [Je-S helptext page](#).

### ***Staff duties***

Summarise the duties of the staff members that will be involved in the project. Ensure that it is clear why it is necessary for you to perform this role at the resource level you have requested. (2000 character limit)

### ***Timetable***

Provide a clear timetable for the project and the intended progress of the research through the different stages. This helps reviewers to assess the proposed approach and facilitates monitoring. The stages are defined broadly and are not intended to impose any model of research. In some cases (e.g. theoretical work) not all stages will be applicable. 'Preparation and design work' refers to research instruments, work guidelines, samples etc. - not to the overall design of the project, which should be completed before you complete the proposal. The timetable should demonstrate that the research has been properly planned and the time needed to complete it, including dissemination activities, has been carefully estimated.

Your planned timetable can be expanded upon if necessary within your case for support.

### ***Ethical information***

This section must be comprehensively addressed. (4000 character limit)

Applicants must ensure the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard. They must clearly state how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised.

The [ESRC's Framework for Research Ethics](#) contains a full explanation of the ESRC's approach, with guidance for applicants.

### ***Other support***

Enter details of any support sought or received from any other source for this or other research in the same field in the past three years. Complete all fields for support either received or pending a decision. Contributions from project partners should not be entered here – they should be detailed in the 'Project partners' section.

### ***Related/previous proposals***

Please state whether your application under this Funding Opportunity is related to any proposals previously submitted to us. Please note the [policy on 'invite only' resubmissions](#). You must detail the appropriate related proposal and its relationship here. Select 'Related Proposals', then 'Add New Related Proposal Item' before entering the details of any related proposals; enter the reference numbers of any support sought or received from us in the past five years. Please note that this only relates to previous ESRC and/or ADR UK research grants, including previous applications.

### ***Staff***

If your project requires staff other than the team of investigators, their details should be entered here. 'Directly Allocated staff' are those who will be working directly on the project, but whose involvement on the grant can only be based on an estimate of the time the work will take (e.g. investigators). 'Directly Incurred staff' are those whose time on the project is actual, auditable, and verifiable (e.g. researchers and technicians). It is also possible to capture researcher salary costs under the exceptions (100% contribution) cost type, if they are international based.

This call does not allow for the inclusion of associated studentships.

### ***Resources***

All resources requested must also be fully justified in the 'Justification of Resources' attachment. This Funding Opportunity will provide 18 to 24 months funding with an overall limit of £375,000 (100% FEC) per grant. If successful, ADR UK will meet 80% of the full economic costs on proposals submitted and the host institution is expected to support the remaining 20%.

### ***Travel and subsistence (T&S)***

Add each item of justified travel and subsistence required for your project. You should indicate the calculations upon which this figure is based in the 'Destination and Purpose' box.

### ***Equipment***

It is not expected that this section is completed for this call as applicants are not expected to need to purchase individual items of equipment over £10,000.

### ***Social surveys***

Social survey costs which are being sub-contracted should be included under this section and are eligible for FEC exception funding at 100% (for the amount sought from the council). The exception option should not be selected. (See 'other directly incurred costs' section if surveys are to be done using in-house resources).

### ***Other directly incurred costs***

Including justified project specific consumables, consultancy fees, equipment costing less than £10,000, recruitment and advertising costs.

Costs for social survey work proposed to be done using in-house resources should also be included under this section and will be funded at the standard 80% FEC funding rate.

Proposals including such costs will need to justify why the work should not be subject to external competition, and provide benchmarking or other data to support a case that best value for money is being achieved through using research organisation staff rather than external contractors.

### ***Other directly allocated costs***

Including support staff salaries, a share of the costs of departmental support staff, and the costs of access to major research facilities.

### ***Estates and indirect costs***

Your Research Office will be able to assist with this section. Estate and indirect costs are specific to each research organisation, and do not require justification in your case for support.

Research organisations that have implemented the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology and have passed the Quality Assurance process should apply their own estate and indirect costs. Non-research organisations that are not required to implement TRAC must have a robust costing methodology in place that has been validated in order to apply their own estates and indirect cost rates. The standard default rates should be used where research organisations have not yet developed their own rates.

### ***Data collection***

Applicants must adhere to ESRC policy. Please refer to the full statement on data management planning and datasets deposition requirements for data intensive investments in the [ESRC Research Data Policy](#) and in the [Research Funding Guide](#). Explain clearly how you will meet these requirements if relevant to your proposal. Complement but do not duplicate the information provided in the Data Management Plan as explained below.

If the research involves data creation or collection, we strongly recommend that you consult the UK Data Service (UKDS) early on.

Applicants are eligible to claim costs for cataloguing and preparing data for archiving. If these costs are claimed from the ESRC, they will have to be included in the overall costs of the project. The applicants are required to fill in the relevant section in the Je-S form and where appropriate to provide more information in the Justification of Resources. Where necessary, please seek clarification of these costs by contacting UKDS.

### ***Project partners***

If you have secured a commitment from another organisation to provide additional resources, including an in-kind contribution for this project, the details of that support should be entered here. A letter from the partner organisation confirming the level of support specific to this proposal must be included as an attachment. Project partner letters of support must be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission date.

### ***Classification***

Please identify whether the research will involve significant collaborative contributions from colleagues outside of the UK. If so, please expand within the 'Case for support' attachment.



## *User involvement*

If 'Users' have been/will be engaged with your research project, please specify the nature of their engagement. 'Users' are those individuals, groups, or organisations who have an interest in or may benefit from the research. Users may be from the public sector, commercial private sector, civil society, or the wider public. Engaging users in your research from its conception and development through to the dissemination stage is likely to increase the impacts achieved. Applicants should expand upon how the proposed work will be managed to engage users and beneficiaries in the 'Case for support' attachment.

## **5.6. Attachments**

It is important that applicants **only submit the supporting attachments specified in this document**. Attachments should be uploaded in PDF (rather than Word) format to reduce document corruption issues, and should be in minimum font size 11 with 2cm margins.

The following are mandatory Je-S attachments for this Funding Opportunity:

- Case for support
- Justification of resources
- CV

Other attachments include:

- Workplan
- Letters of support from key partners or stakeholders (if applicable)
- Other annexes (maximum six pages total)

'List of publications' should just be included where references are cited in the proposal. Additional letters of support are optional.

**Important note:** If you are unclear about whether you can include a specific attachment, please contact [hub@adruk.org](mailto:hub@adruk.org) for advice as unrequested attachments can hinder the processing of your application. ADR UK reserves the right to return or reject applications that include attachments not permitted for this Funding Opportunity.

### ***Case for support (maximum six sides of A4)***

This is the body of your proposal. It must not exceed six sides and must include details on:

- the overall approach and planned methods to conduct the evaluation
- evaluation expertise in the team
- previous relevant work
- plans for engaging with relevant stakeholders, including data owners, TREs, and academic and non-academic researchers that use them
- commitment to actively engage with the activities of the ADR UK-led public consultation on public attitudes to synthetic data
- understanding of the synthetic data landscape, and knowledge of some of the barriers and opportunities it presents for supporting research using secure data
- knowledge exchange and impact plans.

Please pay close attention to the four assessment criteria and their related assessor questions set out in the 'How we will assess your application' section of the [Funding Finder page](#). In brief, these are:

- Scientific excellence
- Delivery confidence
- Collaboration and engagement
- Value for money.

Use the 'Case for support' to ensure that all elements are addressed in full, taking account of information provided elsewhere in the application.

#### ***Justification of resources (maximum two sides of A4)***

A two-side A4 statement justifying the resources required to undertake the research project. In order not to miss any costings from the Je-S form or any justifications for the items requested, we recommend that you match the costs to the proposal headings in the Je-S form. Where you do not provide explanation for an item that requires justification, it will be cut from any grant made. Please refer to the [Je-S helptext](#) for further guidance.

#### ***CV (maximum two sides of A4 per applicant)***

A CV for each applicant and any other named research staff member or consultant must be included. This should include contact details, qualifications (including class and subject), academic and professional posts held since graduation, a list of the most relevant and recent publications, and a record of research funded by the ESRC and other bodies. This should not exceed two A4 sides.

#### ***List of publications***

The bibliography for references cited in the proposal (generally the 'Case for support') only. Please note publications not cited in the proposal should not be added here. A list of the most relevant and recent publications by applicants should be included in the applicant CV.

### **5.7. Other attachments**

#### ***Workplan (maximum two sides of A4)***

A detailed workplan should be included as attachment type 'Other.' A maximum of two sides of A4 can be used to highlight key milestones for the programme of work. This attachment must not be used to expand on the 'Case for support'.

#### ***Cover letter/letters of support (maximum one side of A4 for each letter of support)***

Letters of support from relevant TREs are strongly encouraged. The successful applicant will need to work closely with them to evaluate the costs and benefits of different approaches for producing and sharing synthetic data.

Cover letters should only be included in exceptional circumstances. If this proposal is an invited resubmission to the ESRC, the appropriate cover letter(s) must be included.

### **5.8. Proposal classifications**

The information provided in this section will be used by ESRC to identify appropriate panel reviewers. It would therefore assist us greatly if you could populate the 'Research Area', 'Qualifiers', and 'Keyword' sections to provide a comprehensive description of your area of expertise.

The proposal classification area replaces the ESRC-specific discipline section, and is a harmonised (and expanded) structure agreed across UKRI. Therefore if your area of expertise crosses the remits of more than one council you will now only need to provide the information once.

It is an essential requirement that your **primary research area** is in the social sciences. We strongly encourage inter/multidisciplinary working both within and beyond the social sciences, as long as at least 50% of the proposed programme of research is within ESRC remit. Please refer to the list of [research areas that fall within ESRC remit](#) for further information.

### 5.9. *Submit your proposal*

After all mandatory sections have been completed, the submit button will appear across the top menu bar. Please ensure that you have **completed all attachments** that are not standard mandatory attachments for Je-S but are a **mandatory requirement to be completed for this specific Funding Opportunity**. The submit button will route your finalised proposal to the authorising facility within your organisation (as explained in Section 5.3 'Before creating your proposal'). Please note that the proposal must be formally submitted by your organisation before **9 May 2023 at 16:00**.

### 5.10. *Tracking your proposal*

There are additional document maintenance actions that can be undertaken via the 'Document actions' button in Je-S. For example, the 'Show submission path' will indicate to you where in the organisation submission chain the proposal is located (and who holds current responsibility) - e.g. owner, approval pool, submitter pool, or submitted to Council.

## 6. Further enquiries

| Query category   | Contact  |
|--|--|
| Funding Opportunity queries                                  | <a href="mailto:hub@adruk.org">hub@adruk.org</a>                 |
| Je-S System queries  | <a href="mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org">JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org</a> |
| General or unknown, to be passed on to appropriate recipient | <a href="mailto:hub@adruk.org">hub@adruk.org</a>                 |