

## Frequently asked questions from the webinar – Global Centers (01 March 2023)

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Please note:

- The slides and the recording from the webinar are being made available.
- If the question that you raised has not been answered, then it is still being considered for a response.
- Any specific remit or scope questions, please contact [energy@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:energy@epsrc.ukri.org) and a UKRI colleague will be in contact.
- For specific queries from international partners such as eligibility, please consult their specific guidance.
  - For the US, <https://beta.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/global-centers-gc>.
  - For Canada, [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/NSF-NSF/index\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/NSF-NSF/index_eng.asp).
  - For Australia, <https://www.csiro.au/GlobalCenters>.

### Eligibility and collaborations

Q: Can a HEI only submit one proposal for this call?

How many co-investigators / HEIs are allowed per consortium?

A: There is no limit to the number of proposals an organisation can be involved in from the UK. Please note UK applicants can be named investigators in a maximum of 2 proposals but named as a principal investigator on only 1 proposal.

For international partners, please consult their specific guidance.

- US: <https://beta.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/global-centers-gc>.
- Canada: [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/NSF-NSF/index\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/NSF-NSF/index_eng.asp).
- Australia: <https://www.csiro.au/GlobalCenters>.

Q: Do you also need to include partners in Canada / Australia or would US/UK only collaborations be funded?

A: We welcome consortiums involving all four countries – it is optional to include partners in Canada / Australia. To be eligible you have to include at least one US NSF funded institution and researcher.

Q: For the Global Centers in clean energy and climate change opportunity, would Catapults be eligible to apply?

A: A full list of the eligible independent research organisations and Catapults can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check->



[if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/eligible-independent-research-organisations/#contents-list](#)

- Q: Is the call only for US/Canadian/Australian institutions, or can include others as "third parties"?
- A: As this is an NSF led call the partnership must have a US lead PI and institution, collaborating with researchers in the UK. You may then wish to partner with researchers from Canada and Australia. UKRI will only fund organisations and researchers that meet our eligibility requirements and criteria. Individuals from third party countries may participate if they have their own funding from local funding organisations.
- Q: Does the overall PI need to be in the US (NSF funded)?
- A: As an applicant to this initiative, you must collaborate with at least one researcher from the US who meets the NSF eligibility requirements; the US researcher will be the overall PI on the proposal. There will also need to be a lead PI for the UK component.
- Q: An advisory board must be established. Is that a board for the overall Global Center or for the UK component?
- A: UKRI expects an independent advisory board is set-up - this is a UK specific requirement so will likely focus on the UK aspects. We advise you to discuss with your prospective partners this requirement and what might be appropriate for the whole consortium, and the proposed Global Center.
- Q: Can the grant fund PhD studentships in the UK?
- A: Studentships are not an eligible cost from UKRI within this funding opportunity.
- Q: Does geographical distribution mean the national distribution of UK Investigators/UK institutions participating in the proposal, or global distribution (i.e., having Canadian and Australian partners is an advantage)?
- A: UKRI may consider both national and international distribution as part of our portfolio approach to assigning UKRI funding to meritorious projects.
- Q: Can UK institutions host a center or will centres be hosted/located in the US?
- A: The Global Center is the collaboration of the whole consortium. There will not be individual global centers for each component of the consortium it will be hosted in collaboration across the different partners.
- Q: Are UK projects required to meet more than one of the priority areas listed under clean energy? Will this have any bearing on the proposal's assessment?
- A: Proposals do not need to meet more than one of the priority areas to be deemed eligible. There is also no maximum on how many your proposal can span. Proposals will be assessed using the NSF's merit review process.

### **Submission requirements and assessment process**

- Q: Do the UK and US sides need to submit two separate applications according to the format requirement of respective funding agencies?
- A: The UK side will need to submit the full NSF application package to UKRI in addition to UK-specific documents such as the JoR for UK costs, CVs for named researchers, and project partner letters of support.  
The case for support attachment within the UKRI submission must be the full application package submitted to the NSF by the whole consortium – this must follow the NSF requirements. No peer review will occur on the UKRI side – remit and eligibility checks will be completed as standard practice.
- Q: Does the UK side need to prepare another case for support?
- A: The document submitted under the case for support (UKRI) attachment must be the full application package submitted to the NSF. A separate case for support will not be needed for submission to UKRI. The NSF documentation will outline the full center proposal not just the specifics of the US component and should be uploaded at the case for support to UKRI.
- Q: For UK submission through Je-S, would this proposal be considered a joint proposal?
- A: The UK submission through Je-S should be one single submission to UKRI, led by the UK PI. Although proposals may be multi-institutional, only 1 application form should be submitted for each bid.
- Q: On the review process of US/UK proposals, will NSF review the proposal(s) separately from UKRI and then the two sides will convene for the selection, or is only NSF reviewing and UKRI will be matching the funding of selected proposals?
- A: NSF will coordinate and manage the review of proposals in consultation with the participating international funding organisations, according to the respective arrangements with NSF. Full information on the assessment process can be found on the NSF solicitation web page linked below. UKRI will not conduct a parallel review but following the NSF-led review, UKRI will consider all fundable proposals and assign UKRI funding to meritorious projects as appropriate.  
UKRI and other funding agency partners will be invited to suggest reviewers and will also observe the review process led by NSF.

### **Budget and costings**

- Q: Can you provide clarification on the total funding provided to a consortium applying for the Global Centers in clean energy and climate change?
- A: The maximum funding for the UK component is £5M (80% fec). UK researchers must collaborate with at least one NSF-eligible US researcher.
- Q: If a UK Partner and a US Partner were to collaborate, would the UK partner be able to request up to 80% of £6.25m and then the US partner would be able to request up to \$5 million?

A: UK researchers must collaborate with at least one NSF-eligible US researcher. UK researchers will be able to apply for funding from UKRI of up to £5m (80% FEC) and will only be able to support the UK-component. US partners can request up to the \$5m allowed by NSF. Your team must include a US researcher who assumes the role of Principal Investigator (PI) for the NSF grant. The PI must meet NSF eligibility requirements and is responsible for submitting the complete NSF application package to NSF. Your partnership may include other US researchers who meet NSF eligibility requirements. The current competition includes CSIRO and NSERC / SSHRC as partner funding agencies as well. As such, you may also collaborate with researchers from Canada and/or Australia. These researchers must meet their agencies respective eligibility requirements to receive funding from these organizations.

Q: What other "eligible" activities are included in this fund?

A: Normal costs associated in running a standard research grant may be applied for. You are expected to request the funding required to achieve the objectives and outcomes proposed. This may include, but is not limited to, funding for:

- principal investigator time to lead the UK-component and co-investigator(s) time to provide the required interdisciplinary inclusive approach
- research staff costs and associated consumables
- travel and subsistence
- supporting impact activities (including stakeholder and user engagement, policy engagement and public engagement)
- supporting networking and community building activities, to enable engagement and collaboration across key disciplines and sectors, and with policy officials
- supporting governance, monitoring and evaluation activities

More information can be found on our [website](#).

Q: Regarding industry support and possible funding - NSF says "inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited" is this inconsistent?

A: Project partners are able to match funding for the project but cost sharing between members within the Global Center is prohibited. UK researchers can not share funds with US researchers and vice-versa.

### **Project partners and industrial support**

Q: Are there any expectations on minimum levels of partner support for proposals?

A: There are no minimum or maximum levels of support for leverage from project partners, but you should consider how different partnerships can add positive value to the research.

Q: Will there be any restrictions on the nationality of industry partners?

A: UKRI works within the UK governments principle of trusted research and innovation, which centers around protecting the UK's intellectual property,



sensitive research, people and infrastructure from potential theft, misuse and exploitation, including as a result of hostile activity by state and other actors. UKRI's [Trusted Research and Innovation](#) work programme is country agnostic: it is not targeting a particular country or group of people.

### **General remit questions**

Any specific remit or scope questions, please contact [energy@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:energy@epsrc.ukri.org) and a UKRI colleague will be in contact.

Q: Is the "last 20%" of emissions clearly defined somewhere?

A: This is outlined within the UKRI funding finder opportunity page: <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/global-centers-in-clean-energy-and-climate-change/>

Q: Since my team will be submitting from the US, does the UKRI restriction on needing to address energy topics (even in relation to climate change) apply? Or can the proposal be focussed on climate change solutions primarily?

A: UK participants need to consider UKRI requirements. They should follow the balance outlined on clean energy and climate change on the UKRI funding opportunity page and consider this as they form their consortiums.

Q: A requirement of the UKRI funding for this opportunity is that the UK component of the global centres proposal must be at least 65% focused on delivering clean energy solutions. UK proposals can either focus on clean energy or clean energy and climate change solutions. Does this mean proposals are allowed to focus on climate change solutions, but only up to 35%? And is this weighting by full economic cost, or something else?

A: In simplest terms, the 65/35 split for UK proposals should be understood as UKRI wishing for UK funded participants to focus primarily on solutions rather than observing and diagnosing climate change. UK proposals can either focus on clean energy or clean energy and climate change solutions. For instance, the 65/35 consideration should result in the majority of the proposal objectives being weighted towards clean energy solutions for each proposal.

Q: The four UKRI priority areas under the clean energy theme do not clearly map onto the themes in the NSF call and as the NSF are assessing should we align to the NSF themes?

A: UKRI has identified its priority areas under the clean energy and climate change themes. UK participants need to consider UKRI requirements. They should follow the balance outlined on clean energy and climate change on the UKRI funding opportunity page and consider this as they form their consortiums.

Q: Does your project have to impact the countries listed only, or can we include other countries - in terms of delivery?

A: The project does not have to just directly impact the four main funding agencies countries. As long as the project is addressing the priority areas the impact and delivery could be based around a third-party country. Centers will

support research to address a societal challenge of regional or global importance related to climate change and/or clean energy that requires international collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement.

Q: For US/UK proposals, could you comment on the complementarity of the two sides? Shall each side (US or UK) be complete in terms of portfolio, or shall the two sides complement each other in terms of expertise?

A: The individual components led by the different countries needs to come together to contribute to the Global Centers overall vision and goal. An appropriate level of complementarity is needed. Consortiums should be driven by a bold vision for high-impact, use-inspired Global Centers along with a clear strategy to integrate diverse perspectives from different disciplines, international partners, and stakeholder groups into the research.

Q: Is commercial impact important, or science and society impact a favoured impact and what kind of research you will encourage for these Centres, fundamental, applied or mix of both?

A: The implementation of the Global Centers call will support interdisciplinary proposals to advance use-inspired research in clean energy and climate change. While the research should still be fundamental i.e., full implementation of solutions is not supported, it should also have the potential to provide a variety of possible benefits, including to society and to the sustainability of our natural and physical environment, whilst informing the actions of stakeholders toward foreseeable potential applications.

Q: Do you see health benefits as part of this call and is it expected that the proposal covers all the aspects suggested: social science, natural science etc?

A: The Global Centers call is open for application across all of the UKRI research councils. Partnerships must be interdisciplinary and can involve researchers who are in any field of the:

- social sciences
- humanities
- natural sciences
- engineering and physical sciences
- biotechnological and biological sciences

As outlined in the announcement opportunity, cross-cutting considerations could include “solutions that also secure co-benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, resilient ecosystem services, improved air quality, health, and supply chain resilience”.

Q: Would projects around nuclear energy be entertained?

A: Proposals around nuclear energy are eligible if the proposal fits into the priority areas within clean energy and climate change.