



Funding opportunity

Resilient UK coastal communities and seas: outline stage

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) , Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) , Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) , UK Research and Innovation
Co-funders:	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£11,500,000
Award range:	£2,500,000 - £2,900,000
Publication date:	17 April 2023
Opening date:	13 April 2023
Closing date:	13 July 2023 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 22 June 2023 - [see all updates](#)

Apply for funding to enhance the resilience, health and wellbeing of UK coastal communities and seas.

Your transdisciplinary research project will apply a place-based approach to transform our understanding of UK coastal communities and seas. You will utilise relevant approaches to build understanding and collaborate with stakeholders to enable transformative decision making.

The programme will enhance community knowledge mobilisation and improve resilience in the management of UK coastal areas and seas.

You must be based at an eligible UK research organisation to apply.

We aim to support up to four research grants, beginning in April 2024. The full economic cost (FEC) of each project can be up to £2.9 million (100% FEC).

Who can apply

The principal investigator for this funding opportunity must be based at an organisation eligible for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding for the duration of the grant.

Eligible organisations are:

- UK higher education institutions
- research council institutes
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations
- public sector research establishments
- NHS bodies with research capacity

[Check if your institution is eligible for funding.](#)

Co-investigators from business, third sector or government can be included in research applications, please refer to [ESRC guidance](#) on how to do this. We encourage active collaboration between UK researchers and those in other countries, and co-investigators based in overseas research organisations can be included through the ESRC [international co-investigators policy](#).

Applicants may be involved in no more than two proposals submitted to this funding opportunity. Only one of these may be as the lead principal investigator. Only those applicants invited to submit full proposals after the assessment of outline proposals may do so.

This funding opportunity is being administered by ESRC on behalf of UKRI.

What we're looking for

Aim of the investment

This programme will address the critical need for a transdisciplinary and a whole systems understanding of the resilience of UK coastal seas, coastal communities, and the natural capital these areas support. To support collaboration with stakeholders to build understanding and enable transformative decision-making utilising natural capital or other approaches.

The programme will enhance community knowledge mobilisation and improve resilience in the management of UK coastal areas and seas.

Objectives and desired outcomes

The programme objectives are to:

- apply place-based approaches to transform our understanding of climatic, environmental, health, economic, social, and cultural factors affecting UK coastal communities and seas
- develop the resilient management of UK coastal seas, coastal communities, and the natural capital these areas depend on and support, by delivering the evidence base, tools and practical solutions
- inform policy and enable transformative decision making in collaboration with local communities
- build capacity and capability for transdisciplinary research and the mobilisation of research evidence within UK coastal communities and seas

The anticipated long-term outcomes of the programme will be a coordinated network of academics, policy makers, communities and wider stakeholders that are able to implement scalable solutions to improve the resilience, health and wellbeing of UK coastal communities.

Thematic areas

Proposals for the research projects should take a transdisciplinary approach, to address at least two of the following thematic areas.

Theme one: understand the impacts of climate change on UK coastal areas to build resilience of marine environments and coastal communities, and to enhance ocean literacy

Coastal communities mainly rely on livelihoods such as fishing, tourism, and the energy industry. This puts a strain on natural areas such as marine habitats and ecosystems, which are under increasing pressure from climate change, and makes local economies vulnerable to shocks.

There is a need to explore what future opportunities and interventions can be implemented to increase the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on and interact with them.

Projects should inform policy and decision making on the impacts of climate on marine natural capital assets and ecosystem service flows, including timescales

of change, and how these impacts will affect local communities. You should engage local communities in order to enhance ocean climate change literacy and stewardship to build resilience to future risks of climate change, such as sea-level rise.

Knowledge gaps that could be considered under this theme include, but are not limited to:

- evaluating the impact of interventions within the scope of the programme and assessing the combined benefits and risks from interventions to establish best practice approaches
- building understanding of the effects of climate change on the marine and coastal environment, and its future impact on UK coastal communities
- identifying effective mechanisms to improve social identity and socio-cultural literacy in coastal communities with a view to building resilience in planning and decision making
- understanding the economic resilience in UK coastal areas, particularly with regards to tourism and other industries, including costs and benefits to communities in successful approaches to building resilience
- building understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of coastal communities and their changing nature. To develop interventions that support communities to sustain and enhance their community and natural environments
- enhancing understanding of how sectoral innovation and diversification in the use and non-use of marine resources can affect resilience of both natural capital assets and coastal communities in the face of climate change

Theme two: to enhance resilience in UK coastal areas by understanding the challenges experienced by coastal communities, and the potential effects on the natural environment

This theme addresses the importance of understanding deprivation in UK coastal communities recognising the unique challenges they face. Specifically, you should set out how the challenges faced by coastal communities can be addressed through local and national initiatives.

Access to services and addressing the wider determinants of health have been identified as important in building long term resilience in coastal communities, including addressing and preventing poor health (including mental health) by utilising nearby marine and coastal environments.

Knowledge gaps that could be considered under this theme include, but are not limited to:

- challenges facing coastal communities in terms of access, accessibility and quality of services, such as education and healthcare and how this relates to the inclusion of different coastal communities to promote innovative and place-based economic growth

- how local, cultural and natural assets can be harnessed to support improvements in health, social and economic inequalities
- drivers of the local needs of coastal communities to build effective solutions to improve coastal community health and wellbeing. It may be useful to engage with the NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration initiative

Theme three: articulate the value and benefits of coastal environments and communities to transform decision making and improve outcomes

This theme is focused on how value and benefits are designated and articulated in the development of coastal policy and decision making. You should set out how your research will deliver transformational change for coastal communities and ecosystems through improved understanding of the value of coastal ecosystem services and 'blue space' and the health, economic, cultural, and societal benefits across different scales.

Knowledge gaps that could be considered under this theme include, but are not limited to:

- informing the case for the value of well-maintained, restored coastal ecosystems and marine environments, including how the condition of natural capital assets affects ecosystem services and links to community wellbeing
- improving how marine and coastal cultural heritage is valued, integrated, and protected within wider policy development and marine management
- understanding the socio-cultural value placed on natural capital by coastal communities and the wider UK population, and how to represent these values effectively in the co-production of policy and decision making
- values of place-based interactions with coastal and marine natural capital in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities, including the condition and role of natural capital assets in enabling beneficial engagement with the marine coastal natural environment

Proposal requirements

Successful proposals must address the following programme requirements:

- a UK coastal focus (this does not include overseas territories) and outline the geographies which will be beneficiaries of the research
- utilise place-based approaches, including, but not limited to, natural capital or systems approaches, which will seek to provide transformative solutions for UK coastal resilience
- develop actionable, scalable tools and solutions that can be applied in other geographic regions of the UK to increase the overall impact of the programme
- champion transdisciplinary approaches in the research design, methods and implementation to build a whole systems understanding of the challenges facing UK coastal communities and coastal environments

- include the smart use of data to build understanding, utilising existing data in novel ways in addition to new research. Proposals could consider access to, and better utilisation of data available, particularly finding novel ways to build granularity where possible. Researchers could consider utilising [linked administrative data \(PDF, 1.1MB\)](#), securely accessible via [Administrative Data Research UK](#)
- define realistic short-term outcomes that can be achieved within the first year of the project and proposals should include legacy plans to ensure the benefits of the project outlive the funding period

What we're not looking for

We are not seeking:

- proposals where the transdisciplinary research does not fit in the remits of all three research councils (AHRC, ESRC and NERC)
- proposals where there is an imbalance of the intellectual content, and some disciplines appear 'bolted' on

Funding

Within the programme, we aim to support up to four transdisciplinary research grants, beginning in April 2024 and lasting up to 54 months. The FEC of each project can be between £2.5 to 2.9 million. We will fund 80% FEC.

Proposals must be able to start on 1 April 2024 and clearly outline how they deliver short-term impacts within the first year of the project, as well as in the medium to long term.

Programme management

The Programme Executive Board (PEB) will provide the strategic direction for the programme and will be the ultimate decision-making authority. The PEB will include representatives from all funders.

The funders will explore ways to support the coordination of funded projects, programme-level stakeholder engagement and knowledge exchange, including supporting a programme network function.

All projects funded under this programme will be required to engage with the programme network function. Projects will be required to participate in relevant programme events and integration activities. Projects should budget sufficient travel and subsistence costs to attend at least four one-day programme events based in the UK.

Applicants are encouraged to consider how their proposed research will complement other relevant UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and Defra supported programmes.

Reporting requirements

There will be a requirement to report through the UKRI reporting system, Researchfish. This is required annually and continues for up to five years after funding ends. For details, see [reporting your project's outcomes](#). Grant holders will also be asked to provide regular and ad hoc project progress reports to the PEB and programme network function.

Environmental sustainability

UKRI recognises that we must embed environmental sustainability in everything we do.

You are expected to consider the environmental impact of the research activities and to put in place actions that encourage sustainability and mitigate any risk of environmental harm.

Equality, diversity and inclusion approach

You should evidence within your proposal that you have considered equality, diversity and inclusion in how the research project will operate. This includes providing an inclusive environment for researchers at all career stages to thrive.

How to apply

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#).

You can find advice on completing your application in:

- the [Je-S handbook](#)
- [Je-S guidance for applicants \(PDF, 202KB\)](#)

We recommend you start your application early.

Your host organisation will also be able to provide advice and guidance.

Submitting your application

Before starting an application, you will need to log in or create an account in Je-S.

All investigators involved in the project need to be registered on Je-S.

Any investigators who do not have a Je-S account must register for one at least seven working days before the opportunity deadline.

When applying:

1. Select 'documents', then 'new document'.
2. Select 'call search'.
3. To find the opportunity, search for: Resilient Coastal Communities and Seas 2023 Outline.

The remaining selection fields will automatically be populated.

Once you have completed your application, make sure you 'submit document'.

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

Deadline

ESRC must receive your application by 13 July 2023 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time. Please leave enough time for your proposal to pass through your organisation's Je-S submission route before this date.

You should ensure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines that may be in place.

Attachments

Mandatory attachments include:

- case for support, up to four sides of A4 (this is the main body of your proposal, see the Je-S guidance attachment for detailed instructions)
- justification of resources, up to two sides of A4
- [Résumé for Research and Innovation](#) up to four sides of A4

Please be aware that Defra should not be included as a project partner on applications, as they are a co-funder for this programme.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

The assessment of applications will be a two-stage process:

- outline proposal stage
- full proposal stage

Outline proposals will be assessed and shortlisted by an assessment panel. Shortlisted applicants will subsequently be invited to submit applications to the

full proposal stage that will open in October 2023 and close in December 2023.

Assessment criteria: outline stage

Applications submitted under this funding opportunity will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria. The assessment criteria to be used will be as follows:

- research excellence
- fit to scheme

Funders will use the recommendations from the outline panel, along with the overall funding opportunity requirements and the available budget, in making the decision to invite applicants to the full proposal stage.

Funders reserve the right to use the recommendations to create a balanced portfolio across research themes and the remits of the funders. We will seek to maximise the available programme budget through the assessment process.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) reserves the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

UKRI recognises the relationship between research assessment and research integrity, and supports the [San Francisco declaration on research assessment](#).

Contact details

Get help with developing your proposal

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

Ask about this funding opportunity

ESRC Environment Team

Email: environment@esrc.ukri.org

Please add 'Coastal Communities and Seas' in the subject line.

We aim to respond within four working days.

Get help with applying through Je-S

Email

jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org

Telephone

01793 444164

Opening times

[Je-S helpdesk opening times.](#)

Additional info

Webinar

We held a webinar on 2 May 2023 outlining the aims and objectives of the funding opportunity.

[Watch resilient UK coastal communities and seas webinar recording on Zoom](#)

[Webinar slides \(PDF, 3.5MB\)](#)

[Webinar frequently asked questions \(PDF, 146KB\)](#)

Strategic alignment

The Resilient UK Coastal Communities and Seas programme is jointly funded by central funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and AHRC, ESRC, Defra and NERC. By working collectively, we are harnessing the full power of the UK's research and innovation system to tackle large-scale and complex challenges.

This opportunity is supported through UKRI's strategic theme '[creating opportunities, improving outcomes](#)', through which UKRI is seeking to improve outcomes for people and places across the UK by identifying solutions that promote economic and social prosperity.

This funding opportunity is relevant to priority one 'net zero, environment, biodiversity and climate change' of the [ESRC 2022 to 2025 strategic delivery plan](#), which sets out our commitment to invest in new ambitious interdisciplinary programmes on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

It will contribute to [NERC's strategic delivery plan](#) ambitions of place-based research (objective two), and embedding environmental science within UKRI's strategic themes and building national resilience to climate change (objective five). The programme will predominantly address the AHRC vision by contributing to our understanding of contemporary challenges.

The programme will also link to the following priorities detailed in the [AHRC strategic delivery plan](#):

- leading interdisciplinary responses to national priorities, working at the heart of thriving communities
- making connections between people, sectors and capabilities
- being open and supporting the arts and humanities to thrive

Defra investment is through its flagship three-year [Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment \(NCEA\) programme](#). The marine arm of the NCEA programme is leading the way in supporting government ambition to integrate natural capital approaches into decision making.

This will provide policy with a robust natural capital evidence base, suite of tools, and a framework where environmental, economic and societal information are brought together to transform the way we make decisions to protect and enhance our marine and coastal environments.

Context

The UK's coastal communities and coastal environments are a diverse and heterogenous grouping, with a wide range of needs and challenges. Some of the challenges to these localities which also impact the potential opportunities for development include:

- historical context
- seasonal industries (fishing, tourism and more)
- peripherality (access to services)
- issues of deprivation
- ageing populations
- healthcare
- environmental change
- the impact of both climate change and resulting policies

Understanding needs and the capacity for adaptation, and how communities are represented in policymaking, is critical for the implementation of policies that will build resilient and sustainable UK coastal communities and seas.

UK coastal seas, stretching from the coastline out to the edges of the continental shelf, make up 78% of UK territorial waters and encompass the majority of UK marine natural capital assets, with an estimated value of £211 billion. These seas support a diverse and dynamic range of coastal communities and industries, and provide vital spaces for recreation, contribute to societal wellbeing through engagement with blue space, and are home to a wide range of maritime culture and heritage.

Managing this natural capital to ensure the UK governments' vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse seas, while promoting equitable access and connection to these seas from across all areas of society and conserving associated culture and heritage is a pressing challenge. Ambitious targets are set to transform governance of UK seas and meet government commitments, while also meeting pressures from changing climate and its impacts on ocean health.

Coastal communities are geographically significant as areas which experience deprivation within the UK, both in terms of health ([CMO report 2021](#)) and development ([Levelling Up, 2022](#)). Addressing the natural and human dimensions of this complex socio-ecological challenge is a large knowledge gap that requires the integration of humanities, natural, and social sciences.

Solutions are required that include environmental, human, cultural and societal influences within a whole system understanding of coastal seas to enhance adaptive capacity to future climate impacts and shocks.

Responsible innovation

As directed by the UKRI policies and standards, [responsible innovation](#) aims to ensure that:

- unintended negative impacts are avoided
- barriers to dissemination, adoption and diffusion of research and innovation are reduced
- the positive societal and economic benefits of research and innovation are fully realised

Applicants for this opportunity will be required to practice responsible innovation following the UKRI guidance.

The Funding Service

The full proposal stage of this funding opportunity is likely to run on the Funding Service our new funding platform, rather than via the Joint Electronic Submission system. Set up an account on the Funding Service.

If successful at the outline stage, you will be invited to submit a full application, and will receive guidance at that point.

The Funding Service has a digital form-based format with sections addressing application questions which are the assessment criteria for the funding opportunity.

Please note that this opportunity is running concurrently with the 'Place-based approaches to sustainable living opportunity', and the ESRC Centre competitions on 'Sustainable and equitable low-carbon living' and 'Climate

change and health'. Please consider which opportunity would be the most suitable to apply for.

Each funding opportunity has different requirements and so we wish for applicants to determine the best fit for their work to improve their chance of success. Please note that you will not be able to submit the same proposal to the different funding opportunities.

Definitions

Natural capital

Natural capital is the living and non-living parts of our natural environment that have value to people, providing us with environmental, economic, cultural and societal benefits. A natural capital approach is about incorporating the wider benefits of the environment into decision making.

Place-based

Place-based approaches are defined for this programme as approaches whereby characteristics and meanings of a certain geography (the 'place') is fundamental to the project proposed. We would expect place-based approaches for this programme to focus at a local to regional level, but produce learnings that could be scalable and generally applicable across other locations.

Health

Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity [Constitution of the World Health Organisation](#).

Health inequalities

Health inequalities: This programme uses the term health inequalities to include varying definitions and interpretations of inequality and inequity, including the unfair and avoidable differences in health across different population groups. Understanding the drivers of such inequalities and the role of community assets in reducing these differences is a core tenet of this programme.

Supporting documents

[Equality impact assessment \(PDF, 203KB\)](#)

[Je-S guidance for applicants \(PDF, 202KB\)](#)

Updates

22 June 2023

Je-S guidance for applicants document has been updated on page eight, under 'Attachments', to clarify mandatory documents for submitting to the funding opportunity.

23 May 2023

Webinar frequently asked questions document added to the 'Additional info' section.

22 May 2023

Webinar recording and slides links added to the 'Additional info' section.

Timeline

○ 13 April 2023

Outline stage opening date

○ 2 May 2023

Webinar

○ 13 July 2023 4:00pm

Outline stage closing date

○ October 2023

Invited full stage opening date

○ December 2023

Invited full stage closing date

○ 1 April 2024

Grants start

Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

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<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/resilient-uk-coastal-communities-and-seas-outline-stage>