



## Funding opportunity

# Place-based approaches to sustainable living: outline stage

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Closed
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Total fund:</b>	£8,900,000
<b>Award range:</b>	£1,000,000 - £2,000,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	13 April 2023
<b>Opening date:</b>	13 April 2023
<b>Closing date:</b>	13 July 2023 4:00pm UK time

Opportunity to apply for funding to research place-based approaches for an environmentally sustainable future and support evidence-based decision making.

Desired outcomes include:

- enhanced understanding of environmental challenges and solutions from a place-based perspective to develop findings, tools and theories, which can be applied by local and national policymakers, communities and practitioners
- co-produced solutions or enhanced understanding of place-based approaches for a sustainable future

The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £2 million and last for up to five years. ESRC will fund 80% FEC.

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## Who can apply

Standard ESRC eligibility rules apply.

The principal investigator for this funding opportunity must be based at an organisation eligible for ESRC funding for the duration of the grant.

Eligible organisations are:

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

Co-investigators from business, third sector or government can be included in research applications. We encourage active collaboration between UK researchers and those in other countries, and co-investigators based in overseas research organisations can be included through our 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 successful at outline stage will be invited to submit full proposals.

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

The lead research organisation involved in a project must be UK based, however, international research organisations (outside of the countries participating in this opportunity) are eligible to be involved as additional partners.

Read ESRC's [international co-investigator policy guidance](#).

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## What we're looking for

### Aim and desired outcomes

ESRC is looking for proposals that deliver interdisciplinary research on place-based approaches for an environmentally sustainable future. The overarching objective for this opportunity is to increase the understanding of place-based approaches for a sustainable future, which will enable enhanced evidence-based decision making.

Desired outcomes of the research include:

- enhanced understanding of environmental challenges and solutions from a place-based perspective to develop findings, tools and theories, which can be applied by local and national policymakers, communities and practitioners
- co-produced solutions or enhanced understanding of place-based approaches for a sustainable living
- contribute towards the evidence base informing the UK net zero by 2050 target and broader environmental, biodiversity and sustainability goals

## Areas of interest

Proposals should consider place-based approaches for an environmentally sustainable future. Areas of interest, could include, but are not limited to:

- the circular economy, resource efficiency, and material, energy and environmental conservation linked to specific locales
- place-based solutions to mitigate and adapt places to climate change
- the role and interaction of diverse factors that combine in a place and their influence on sustainability, for example:
  - behaviour
  - education
  - employment
  - housing
  - transport
  - lifestyles
  - local environments
  - finance
  - trade-offs
  - access to, and role of, digital technology or locally produced essentials
- the impact, effect and longevity of common, multilevel and experimental governance on a place (for example, levelling up initiatives) and how local and place-based bottom-up approaches interact with national and policy-driven top-down approaches

Proposals should:

- shape policy and practice at a local level
- outline their approach to spatial and temporal transferability and scalability
- address the 'just transition' and consider how place-based approaches can address multiple and systemic inequalities
- enhance the governance relationships between civil society bodies, local authorities, central and devolved administrations

# Proposal requirements

Proposals submitted to this funding opportunity must:

- have an interdisciplinary, innovative approach to addressing place-based challenges, which promises to deliver impactful systems-based solutions
- utilise a co-produced approach to place-based issues, identifying mechanisms for wider impact through community engagement, including provision for building capacity and capability in communities, nature agencies, and decision makers at different scales
- aim for transformative change demonstrated through theoretical or practical solutions to address issues at a local level, and potential to scale up
- be able to provide actionable knowledge throughout and beyond the lifetime of the grant
- include interventions that consider the wider impact. For example, intersectionality, spill-over effects, co-benefits, trade-offs and potential impacts for people, nature and environments
- specify how the proposal will add value to current (UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)) investments where this is applicable
- have a UK focus, to align with the desired outcomes of the research. Projects are welcome to consider international comparative examples

Proposals could include the development of theoretical and methodological approaches to enhance our understanding of place-based approaches to a sustainable future. In addition, proposals should consider the value of using existing and novel data, and data infrastructure to support the overarching objective and desired outcomes of the research.

The opportunity is open to allow for a wide range of areas, scales and themes surrounding place-based approaches to be eligible, although at least 50% of the proposed programme of research must fall within [ESRC's remit](#).

Please note that this opportunity is running concurrently with the 'Resilient UK coastal communities and seas 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 you should determine the best fit for your work. You will not be able to submit the same proposal to the different funding opportunity.

## Funding

ESRC will fund research grants, running for five years from a start date of 1 April 2024. The FEC of each project can be up to £2 million. ESRC will fund 80% FEC.

## 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 their proposal that they 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.

## 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.

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## 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 \(PDF, 216KB\)](#)

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: Place based Approaches to Sustainable Living 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
- justification of resources, up to two sides of A4
- [Résumé for Research and Innovation](#) (R4RI), up to four sides of A4 (please note that this should include information for the whole team using R4RI guidance but be attached as a CV)

There are detailed instructions of what is expected in each document within the Je-S guidance attachment.

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## How we will assess your application

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 interdisciplinary 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 of 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.

ESRC reserve the right to use the recommendations to create a balanced portfolio across the research grants.

ESRC reserves the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

UK Research and Innovation recognises the relationship between research assessment and research integrity and supports the [San Francisco declaration on research assessment](#).

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## 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](mailto:environment@esrc.ukri.org)

Include 'Place-based approaches' 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](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org)

## Telephone

01793 444164

## Opening times

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

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## Additional info

### Background information

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.

The government has committed to reach net zero by 2050, which is closely tied to its levelling up and innovation ambitions through a commitment to invest in:

- innovation
- new technologies
- jobs
- healthy, safe, high-quality environments across the country

A place-based approach will be essential to achieve a sustainable future for different geographies, for example:

- villages
- towns
- cities
- regions
- countries
- urban or rural
- inland or coastal

To enable the transition to low-carbon solutions, a thriving green economy, levelling up, and sustainable living, embedded in an understanding of complex local systems and values.



This will involve significant change to the operation of businesses, individual lifestyles and to the economies of places. It will also need a comprehensive understanding of the co-benefits, governance, trade-offs, and impacts (social, economic, and environmental) within places and geographic contexts.

For the rapid climate and biodiversity mitigation and adaptation that is needed there will be both positive and adverse impacts on different communities and places. These will need to take a place-based approach to assess the risk and inform appropriate local solutions dependent upon the environmental, social, economic, and cultural characteristics of the specific area.

Co-producing solutions with different stakeholders across communities will support the development of fair and sustainable solutions suitable for specific geographies. Justice, equity, safety, security and empowerment are vital to effective solutions.

## 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 (Je-S) 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.

## Related opportunities

Please note that this opportunity is running concurrently with the 'Resilient UK coastal communities and seas 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.

Advancing Capacity for Climate and Environmental Social Science have consulted the community on the community on this thematic research area.

[Read their report.](#)

## Supporting documents

[Equality impact assessment \(PDF, 119KB\)](#)

[Je-S guidance for applicants \(PDF, 216KB\)](#)

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## Timeline

- **13 April 2023**  
Outline opening date
- **13 July 2023 4:00pm**  
Outline closing date
- **October 2023**  
Full opportunity opening date
- **December 2023**  
Full opportunity closing date
- **April 2024**  
Grants start

## Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

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<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/place-based-approaches-to-sustainable-living-outline-stage>