

UKRI Systems approaches to advance the UK's transition to net zero: outline. Webinar Questions and Answers

If you have a specific question relating to whether you are within the call's remit, please email energyanddecarbonisation@epsrc.ukri.org

Q) Do you have a list of sectors?

A) No, we are allowing applicant to decide the relevant sectors and systems for their programmes. We haven't defined sector in this funding opportunity as there are so many ways to do this. We want to know how core research challenges are applicable to one than one situation. Peer review will be looking for transferable approaches not those bound to one area or a specific application.

Q) Can the timeline for the call be lengthened?

A) Unfortunately for this call we are unable to extend the timeline. We realise that the full proposal stage is over the summer months. We have included an outline stage to reduce the demand on the community and within the timelines extended as many of the deadlines as was possible. The funding opportunity Equality Impact Assessment form is published in the additional information section.

Q) How will the outlines be assessed?

A) The outline will be assessed by an expert panel in May 2024. Details of the assessment process for the call can be found in the 'How we will assess your application' section of the funding opportunity.

Q) Why is there not a cap on applications?

A) UKRI did not consider it appropriate or necessary to enforce a cap. Only two proposals will be funded. Where appropriate, applicants are encouraged to collaborate across the landscape to build consortia rather than compete.

Q) How many outline applications are you expecting?

A) We are expecting around 20 outline proposals.

Q) How many proposals will you be inviting at the full proposal stage?

A) This decision will be made in response to quality at the outline panel. As we will be funding up to 2 programmes, we expect to select around 5 outline proposals to submit invited full proposals.

Q) Is this funding for basic research or is it network plus type funding?

A) The funding is for programmes of research that will lead to the development, implementation and adoption of systems approaches which will produce actionable insights to drive the UK's net zero transition. Basic research and networking while not the main focus may form part of the programme's activities.

Q) Can we change the costs by more than 10% between outline and full proposal stages?

A) No, cost can only change by 10% and must not exceed the maximum value allowed for each programme of 80% of the FEC (£4.62 million) or 100% FEC £5.78 million.

Q) How much detail is required for the outline proposal costings?

A) Demonstrate briefly that the proposed outline research programme fits within the funding available. Provide the approximate total values in GBP (£) for the expected directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect costs and exceptions.

Q) Can equipment be included in this programme?

A) No, equipment is not eligible through this funding opportunity.

Q) Are studentships eligible costs?

A) No, studentships are not eligible through this funding opportunity.

Q) Are we expected to work with other UK funded investments?

A) Yes. The research programmes must be additive and collaborative to, and not competitive with, other UK based academic, government and industry led centres of expertise and related activities. Where applicable, they should build upon or partner with existing UK and, where appropriate, international academic and stakeholder initiatives relevant to the challenge area of focus including exchanging knowledge, drawing on experience and outcomes and collaborating on data use and collection.

Q) Will you merge outline proposals if there are a number in the same area?

A) Proposals will be assessed on their own merits at outline. If the panel feels it is relevant, they may feedback to applicants there are opportunities to strengthen bids through joining up or strengthening links.

Q) Do the programmes test cases have to be across the UK or can they be in one region?

A) Test cases could be at local, regional or national scale. This will depend on the specific programme and identified beneficiaries.

Q) Will place be an assessment criteria for the full proposal?

A) Place is not one of the assessment criteria, but we are expecting place to be considered in the test cases as relevant.

Q) What are the assessment criteria for the full proposals?

A) The assessment criteria for the full proposal are:

- Vision, approach,
- applicant and team capability to deliver,
- co-creation and stakeholder engagement,
- resources and cost justification,
- programme leadership,
- governance and management,
- plans for impact, translation and adoption,
- ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI),
- and environmental sustainability.

Q) Will all the full applications teams be interviewed?

A) We are expecting the full proposal will be high quality and will all be interviewed.

Q) How can we link with other groups who have applied to UKRI calls that have not yet been funded?

A) Your proposal will have to stand alone in case the other proposals are not successful but can include collaboration with groups who hold or have applied to other UKRI funding calls. The research programmes must be additive and collaborative to, and not competitive with, other UK based academic, government and industry led centres of expertise and related activities.

Q) Can government departments be included as project partners?

A) Yes, government departments can be included as project partners.

Q) Where do we add Project Partners contribution at the outline stage?

A) Existing and potential partnerships and any contribution should be described as part of the response to the Co-creation and stakeholder engagement section of the programme.

Q) Can there be a significant change in project partners between the outline and full proposal stages?

A) We realise that there may be some changes in the project partners between the outline and the full proposal stage. We are expecting that this will be to strengthen the programme and do not expect this to significantly change the programme vision. We encourage the addition of further collaborators and project partners between outline and full proposal.

Q) Can the programme look at international test cases and/or applications?

A) Yes. The programmes must advance the UK's transition to net zero so there will have to be a benefit or application relevant to the UK's transition to net zero.

Q) What percentage of the programme should be assigned to the test cases?

A) It is for the applicants to decide what is relevant for their programme.

Q) Can a percentage of the funding be unallocated at the start of the programme such as a flexible fund?

A) Within the programme funding we expect there to be flexibility and the agility to respond quickly to new and evolving challenges. We are not expecting the programmes to manage and distribute a flexible fund through this funding call.

Q) Can you explain what you mean by advocacy? If the systems approach doesn't work what does this mean?

A) We are looking for systems approaches advocates to support broader uptake and use of systems approaches in the Net Zero transition. This means sharing lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful systems approaches.

Q) Will export control rules apply?

A) They may do. Please check <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-strategic-export-controls> or email us for further advice.

Q) What is the difference between beneficiaries and stakeholders?

A) Beneficiaries will benefit from the programmes outputs and the stakeholders will be directly impacted by and/or influence the outputs. There is some overlap and stakeholders may also be beneficiaries of the research programme.

Q) Can non-academic stakeholders be paid at 100% FEC?

A) This will be awarded via a standard grant so the cost will be at 80% FEC.

Q) Can there be changes to the academic team and the partners between outline and full proposal?

A) We would like there to be continuity from outline to full proposal stages but recognise there will be some changes. Significant changes to the transdisciplinary team would have to be discussed with UKRI prior to submission.

Q) Is it possible to have more information on the interview process?

A) Further details on the interview process will be provided to those invited to submit a full proposal.