

Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change Research Projects

Webinar Frequently Asked Questions

Content of this document includes community questions that were submitted in advance and live at the call launch webinar as well as the directly emailed queries to the ukclimateadaptation@nerc.ukri.org mailbox. Questions have been aggregated into themes to aid in the use of this document.

Call Scope

Q1 Will there be scope to cover the role of ecological restoration and nature recovery to both address biodiversity loss and increase carbon sequestration?

A Applications interested in addressing adaptation in terms of biodiversity and natural capital is within scope, however it is important to ensure you clearly address at least one of the four research themes shared today and other key requirements outlined. For more detail please see the funding opportunity on [Funding Finder](#).

Q2 Does adaptation to climate change include evolutionary adaptation, and if not, why not?

A Projects should set out within their project the focus that they think is most important. Yes, it is acceptable to include the study of evolutionary adaptations within your project, where they can inform the design and/or knowledge about other adaptation methods or approaches to impacts from climate change. However, we would not expect to see a whole project centred around evolutionary adaptation. The main aim of the programme is to look at what works best in terms of adaptation to climate change and fundamentally designing and suggesting approaches that can be applied at a local and national level to build UK resilience to the associated risks and vulnerabilities.

Q3 Define a simple transdisciplinary team - and the type/range of output/impact you would see from it?

A Research projects that are considered transdisciplinary must integrate all relevant disciplines, and closely involve policymakers and other stakeholders in co-design and co-delivery through a systems approach. This transdisciplinary team differs from an interdisciplinary team in that it reaches beyond academia into wider relevant stakeholders' involvement in co-design and co-delivery (i.e. transcends traditional boundaries). Your project should enable new research opportunities, approaches or methods that would otherwise not emerge without bringing the different fields together. It should be clearly evident that your project was co-developed with your wider team including your project partners.

In terms of outputs, projects should seek to support key policy questions in the identified thematic areas through cutting edge research focusing on a combination of new knowledge, innovations, and socio-economic change. Examples could include: (1) Impact measurements of adaptation on communities and the local and national economy, (2) Engagements with vulnerable communities in discussions around the co-creation and implementation of adaptation solutions or (3) Identification of barriers and enablers for change at different scales – individual, organisational and across society.

Q4 How will the transdisciplinary team be assessed?

A The panel assessors will use the stated questions included in the Funding Finder call text – see 'Application questions'. In terms of the transdisciplinary team, the assessors will look for evidence of how you have designed your work to:

- demonstrate how the research projects will convene a transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral community with representation from a diverse range of stakeholders

Further details relevant here appear under the questions of 'Approach' and 'Applicant and team capability to deliver'.

Q5 I am curious as to whether we know enough to adapt already, and whether the UK should still be focussing on research into adaptation methods, or whether we should just be doing the adaptations?

A This call allows for implementation of different adaptations to test out what might work in different contexts across the UK. We acknowledge the wealth of research completed on adaptation methods however there is more to be done in terms of drawing that knowledge and/or data together and also consideration of different scenarios, i.e. what is right for one cities demographic might not be right for another's, so it is about 'what works' in different contexts.

Q6 Can projects focus on social science and capacity building?

A Your research project must be transdisciplinary, integrating all relevant disciplines, and closely involving policymakers and other stakeholders in co-design and co-delivery through a systems approach. As a minimum, you must address at least two UKRI council remits (i.e. NERC and one other council such as ESRC), and also must address at least one research theme in your application.

Q7 Within this highly ambitions and complex programme is there space for an impact assessment of low cost Power-To-X SOEC to become a natural part of off grid housing developments, food production, small industries to absorbing CO2 at source and convert to power or other valuable chemicals. Same applies to carbon zero nutrient recovery from wastewater processes. Is this useful for partnering as test cases?

A Case studies delivering adaptation R&I insights are within scope for this call as they fall into research theme four: enablers of adaptation for use by decision makers. Case studies are encouraged to reflect all nations of the UK but are not required to do so.

Q8 Clarification on the key requirements for research projects. In particular, do "timelines/deadlines for when action is needed or should be taken" refer to general adaptive action in policy and practice or to actions within the project?

A This statement in the Funding Finder opportunity for this call refers to the adaptative action in policy and practice generally (rather than project management). Note here the recognition that some adaptation action may be too costly to invest in today given limited benefits but over time, as climate damages increase, more expensive action would be better value for money.

Q9 BBSRC aren't one of the funders listed on the call webpage. Will research within BBSRC's remit be considered within scope?

A Yes, BBSRC remit is within scope as they are members of UKRI but projects must include remits from the contributing councils in this call. As a minimum each application must cover at least 2 UKRI council remits- i.e. NERC and one other but of course can include more.

Q10 Is the expectation that >50% would be NERC remit or can this be equally split across multiple UKRI councils?

A Your project would need to meet a minimum of 10% NERC remit. You would be flexible to decide how much of the second (or more) council remit(s) you would address (i.e. not equally weighted). A list of research areas included in the NERC remit is available to view [here](#).

Q11 Does the Project Lead need to be within NERC remit or can this be represented elsewhere in the team?

A The Project Lead would need to meet the requirements of UKRI funding but otherwise could have any UKRI-council remit background provided that your research project meets a minimum of 10% NERC remit. The assessment panel will expect to see evidence that your team includes appropriate environmental and broader expertise to deliver the proposed research.

Q12 What is the scope for partnering to produce guidance on adaptation?

A Guidance on current understanding, shared learning and/or case studies, for example whether for individual, organisational or across society, that informs and influences policy are certainly within scope of this call. Partnerships are strongly encouraged and should be evidenced as integral to your project. Where possible, you should make every effort to build partner activity with stakeholders to: (1) add value to existing investments (2) align with ongoing activity (3) make use of partner knowledge and expertise.

You should consider where, in cooperation with these stakeholders, project partnership can add value to your project through cash, in-kind contributions, or both. Information on these partnership contributions should be clearly outlined within your application.

Q13 Can research on increasing existing buildings' resistance to rot due to wind and driving rain be supported?

A Provided you evidence that your project would address one of the four research themes and cover NERC remit plus one other Research Council remit then this would be within scope.

Q14 What is meant by (a) climate hazards (or extreme climate hazards), (b) distinguishing between weather hazards and climate hazards?

A For this call, weather hazards are considered transient over days to weeks whereas climate hazards are considered over longer timescales (typically years to decades). Both could include hazards of droughts, floods, wind and heatwaves.

Q15 Is the scope of the research expected to be the whole of the UK or can we focus on specific region/nation?

A Local regions/nations are within scope of this funding call. For example, place-focussed approaches or place-based adaptation initiatives that support local people and the economy. Your research could address shared learning and the identification of areas of similarity in other geographical locations and/or the scaling up to national level. It is recognised that there may be a degree of context specific attributes to your project. However, where possible, a national scale (or local initiatives that can be scaled to national) is encouraged.

Q16 Can projects collaborate and intersect with other existing Defra funded research projects?

A Yes, building on existing investments is required and need not be limited to Defra funded projects (see example UKRI and wider UK investments in climate adaptation in 'Additional information' section on the call text on Funding Finder). Assessors will be looking for evidence on related previous work and how your project will progress this. However, it is important that you do not duplicate research and your consortium members show clear integral roles in your proposed research. This can be direct (cash) or indirect (in-kind) contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.

Q17 Under "Key requirements for research projects" we need to address place-focussed approaches, health and social inequalities, and behavioural responses. Each of these requires specialist knowledge, and

so addressing all 3 would be non-trivial. Are we expected to address all 3, especially for a project which 2.5 years duration?

A You are correct; it is expected that applications will address all three components you have listed. Following a set of roundtables and extensive scoping activities involving academics and wider stakeholders it was deemed achievable for projects to fulfil the key requirements of this call. Funders have taken care and attention to ensure the budget and time available would be sufficient. Projects should be trans-disciplinary, which should allow for the incorporation of these elements and considerations through different analytical lenses.

Eligibility

Q18 Could you clarify if it is a maximum two applications per person or per institute?

A For this funding call you (as an individual) may be involved in no more than two applications submitted to this funding opportunity. Only one of these can be as project lead. There is no demand management for the number of applications a Research Organisation is involved on (i.e. unlimited).

Q19 Is it acceptable to fund community partners as co-applicants in a bid?

A Project co-lead would need to be based at a UK research organisation to be eligible for NERC funding. There are more details available online at the funding opportunity on [Funding Finder](#).

Q20 If an organisation is involved in delivering the Hub, can they also be involved in a research project?

A Yes, it is fine for an organisation to be involved in both the Hub and a research grant project. Similarly, an individual from an research organisation could feasibly be involved in both the Hub and a research project provided the individual has sufficient time allocated to achieve their research objectives, you would in theory be able to be involved in both the hub and apply to this call.

Q21 Who is eligible for the funding from a private commercial sector?

A Businesses, third sector, or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation can be costed for at 100% FEC for eligible costs (for full details, please see [ESRC guidance](#) on Funding Finder), but must not exceed 30% of the overall cost of the grant (at 100% FEC). Eligible costs differ amongst organisation types, for example, for government organisations we will only fund travel and subsistence. See summary table below:

Table 1: Eligible costs for PCLs from UK business, third sector or government organisations

	Business & third sector in receipt of a Subsidy*	Third sector	Government
Staff - Salary	Yes	Yes	No
Staff - NI/Superann	No	Yes	No
Total Research Staff - FTE Limits	1 year FTE	No FTE limit	No

T&S	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Direct Costs	No	Yes	No
Overheads	No	Yes	No
Rules/Constraints	Costs must be less than 30% of total application costs		

* Where an application is recommended for funding, the funder will carry out checks on any third sector PcL organisation which is engaged in economic activity to assess if a Subsidy has been given, in line with the UK [Subsidy Control Act 2022](#). Where it is deemed that a Subsidy has been given the costs awarded to the third sector PcL organisation will be in line with the costing rules governing PcLs from business organisations.

Organisations that are not eligible to be a project lead or co-lead may be involved as:

- **project partners:** will not receive funding directly but will have an integral role in the proposed project.
- **subcontractors:** if providing a service only.

Q22 How can we get funds for individual researchers especially young researchers?

A We very much welcome and encourage Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to apply to this funding call. It is for you to discuss your proposed work, and associated costings, with your colleagues. ECR's are permitted to lead research grant bids and it might also be appropriate in that instance to include a mentor within the bid to support them.

Q23 Is research conducted exclusively overseas eligible?

A The focus for this call is mainland UK, and not international in focus.

The research projects will be expected to focus on the resilience of people, ecosystems and infrastructure in the UK to cascading climate impacts. Looking at international climate risks and how they impact the UK could be in scope, but there should not be a significant focus on countries outside the UK. Lessons learnt from abroad could be incorporated into your research provided it has clear benefits to the UK.

Q24 Can the funding support testing and monitoring in sites or labs?

A Yes, provided the research meets the requires stated in this funding opportunity, these would be eligible.

Q25 Is international collaboration with Canada/Canadian entities or University of Nairobi eligible?

A Yes, you would be able to collaborate with organisations from Canadian or Kenya provided that they meet the criteria as a project partner.

Q26 How can policymakers be involved in proposals?

A There are various ways policymakers could be involved in your project. For example, as a partner that adds value to your project which may be through co-design, shared expertise or knowledge transfer.

Q27 Can we include international government organisations in the proposal, are they eligible for funding?

A International government organisations would not be eligible for direct funding. However, they could be a project partner. This would mean they would be eligible for basic travel and subsistence for attending project meetings however would need to have a significant role in the team providing either through cash or in-kind contributions.

Q28 Is an Early Career Researcher (ECR) eligible to be a Project Lead?

A Yes, ECRs are eligible to be project leads in this call, provided they meet the requirements as stated in the full call text on Funding Finder. If you are new to leading a project, you could also consider having a mentor within your project to support you.

Q29 Would applications from a single institution be acceptable for this call?

A Yes, single institution applications are permitted, however applications must provide evidence to show your team is indeed transdisciplinary. Applicant team and your capability to deliver will be assessed.

Q30 Is this call a potential match for a joint proposal in the UK and in the US via an NSF-UKRI collaboration agreement? If this call precludes a joint UK-USA bid, can US colleagues be costed for their time spent in the UK and expenses such as travel etc as usual? Are such collaborations of interest for this call?

A Whilst overseas collaborations to an extent can be considered as project partners to your project unfortunately, they are not the focus of this funding call which should be on the UK and relevant UK end users. Project leads and co-leads must be based in the UK, and this means if you have international partners that they would need to be self-funded. You may wish to direct your project to one of our regular Discovery Science calls that does support the UKRI-NSF agreement.

Funding

Q31 How much funding will UKRI invest?

A This call is equally funded by UKRI and Defra. UKRI has contributed £6M to this call which has been match funded by Defra for the total of £12M available.

Programme

Q32 How will these funds align with the sister hub call given the timeline?

A The Hub will seek to provide knowledge exchange through community building and better integration of data, with bespoke research focussed on enabling adaptation. The Hub will have a lead time to establish before the awards for this call are known. This time will aid in enabling a joined-up approach between the two calls for this programme. It is expected that the Hub will engage with the project PIs funded in this call directly to identify synergies and communicate the findings.

Q33 When will the hub be awarded? Early engagement with the hub at this call proposal stage would help in optimising the workflow between projects and hub. Will UKRI be able to facilitate this hub engagement with applicants before the full bid submission stage or after?

A The Hub call completed the assessment process in March 2024 and the applicants were informed of their outcome. Once funding has been authorised for release by the funders and the Terms and Conditions accepted by the Research Organisation it is anticipated that the Hub will publicly announce their successful award in April/May with a start date of 1st of August 2024. We will also publish the outcome of the hub on our [UKRI website](#). At the pre-submission stage UKRI will not be involved in brokering dialogue between the

research project applicants with the Hub. However interested applicants to this funding call will be able to directly engage with the Hub team regarding potential activities together. Please note that the Hub will not be able to comment on the quality of any application or show any preference. Once the research projects awards are announcement UKRI will facilitate introductions between the Hub and the successful research projects to initiate discussions and support development around how they will best work together going forwards.

Q34 Will the Hub be involved in the review process for the projects?

A The Hub will not be involved in the assessment process for the research projects however will be informed as appropriate in a timely manner to engage with the awarded PIs as soon as possible to ensure good alignment of its programme of work so that it can best meet the needs of the funded projects in the most effective and coherent way and to agree ways of working together.

Q35 How do you expect to work with the CCC to feed this into CCRA4?

A This programme was co-designed by UKRI, Defra, the Met Office and the Climate Change Committee (CCC). It aims to address challenges identified in the latest CCC National Adaptation progress report around:

- driving reductions in exposure and vulnerability to climate risks
- increasing resilience of people, ecosystems and infrastructure to cascading climate impacts
- understanding risks to the UK economy from climate change outside of the UK

Further, this programme will support the implementation of the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) through:

- dealing with climate risks in a systematic and human-centric way
- understanding the socio-economic landscape to contextualise physical hazard information and give a true picture of climate impact
- enabling adaptation through learning what works and what incentives are needed to enhance the adaptation landscape

It is anticipated that CCC will be involved in the governance structure associated with this programme. Defra, as programme co-funders and the responsible government department for CCRA4, have developed this research call to complement the ongoing research for CCRA4.

Process

Q36 Will we be able to see a list of everyone who has attended this call launch webinar to see who is interested in this space for this call and future research projects?

A Yes, attendees who consented at registration for their email and biography to be shared with other attendees has now been circulated. This was completed via email shortly after the webinar.

Q37 Will you facilitate networking to develop bids?

A For this call the funders have circulated the webinar attendee list (where consent was provided). There are no further planned activities by the funders to broker engagements with potential applicants at the pre-award stage. You would be best placed to identify where relationships need building or enhancing for your application. You may wish to explore the list of wider funding investments provided on Funding Finder for this call such as the 'Place Based Climate Action Network' or explore recent investments in this space such as projects funded by the [UK Climate Resilience programme](#).

Q38 How are you intending to avoid duplication and maximise opportunities for collaborative work across the devolved administrations? How many projects are you likely to fund under each theme?

A Those named on bids should be prepared to deliver as detailed in all applications they are involved in should they be funded. Given the breadth of the call scope and the limited number of awards for this call it is not anticipated there will be significant overlap in projects. Following the assessment panel recommendations, the final decision by funders will take a portfolio balanced approach if required to fund at least one project under each theme, and not fund overlapping projects.

Q39 The call states "You should address at least one research theme in your application"- will the funders and their partners prefer proposals that address more than one theme, or will a focus on a single theme be equally as valued?

A It is best for you as the applicant to decide what would be most appropriate for your project. Quality of applications will be assessed by the assessment panel. You will not be at an advantage or disadvantage if you focus your project on one research theme, or multiple themes. It is, however, important that you sufficiently demonstrate stakeholder engagement and an interdisciplinary approach as appropriate for your project.

Q40 Do Early Career Researchers (ECRs) have higher chances of being awarded funding?

A All applicants including ECRs are welcome to this call. This call has a level playing field for all applicants. There is no New Investigator question. However, your relevant experience will be considered under the assessment criteria for '*Applicant and Team Capability to Deliver*' by the panel.

Q41 How much can the team change between the NoI stage and the full submission stage?

A The Notification of Intent stage (NoI) is there to support the funders in the preparations for the assessment process (e.g. expertise likely required and panel size). We anticipate submissions at this NoI stage may change as your application develops.

Q42 I haven't used TFS previously, is there guidance?

A Yes, there is extensive guidance available in video and written formats. Please see our UKRI webpages for more information: <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/how-applicants-use-the-ukri-funding-service/>. If you have any issues you can call or email our helpdesk.

Q43 Your call suggests that decisions will be made solely by a panel, there is no mention of the usual opportunity to respond to review comments. Is this a correct interpretation?

A Yes you are correct. Applications that are submitted to this call will be assessed by an assessment panel with no requirement for a Project Lead rebuttal stage. As this is an assessment panel, there will be no additional postal peer review and the panel will be larger than usual for a moderating panel to ensure sufficient expertise is represented for a thorough assessment by the panel.

Q44 How will the link up across the UK and the devolved administrations work?

A Once the panel assessment is complete UKRI will facilitate the introductions of the research projects with the Hub. There will be opportunities for devolved administrations to join the Programme Executive Board (PEB) and Programme Advisory Group (PAG) who will provide steer and input throughout the duration of the programme. The research projects will be expected to engage with the Hub and other projects funded through the programme as well as those funded externally that have relevance to the topic of Climate Change Adaptation. The Hub will have a significant role in synthesising relevant research, evidencing and

relating impact to climate change risk and vulnerability and translating this into information on what works in terms of climate adaptation at the local and national scale.

Q45 Defra (and Defra family) and policy makers are not allowed to be project partners; the proposal requires transdisciplinary approach (i.e. to include policy makers). Please can you comment on how we show it is transdisciplinary if we can't include policy makers in the project?

A Defra cannot be named or involved on an application as they are a co-funder, and although Met Office staff cannot be named on the project as they are a partner, you are able to contact them (maccteam@metoffice.gov.uk) to discuss the type of activities that they can contribute to the project. Although Defra cannot be approached ahead of your bid, your bid can reference interaction and engagement with policy makers in Defra, how learnings are relevant to the policy landscape, and how results will be communicated to ensure impact. Policy makers beyond Defra can be approached and named on your application. Our definition of Defra refers to the single core central group, and does not extend to the wider Defra 'family' such as the Environment Agency, JNCC or FERA. This [map](#) published in 2024 shows the Science Advisory Councils and Committees (SACs), and Arm's-Length Bodies (ALB) which provide science and evidence advice to government may be useful to view.

Met Office Questions

Q46 If we want to work with the Met Office, please can you explain how we would go about this?

A You should contact the following email address of MACCTeam@metoffice.gov.uk for all enquires relating to your requirements from the Met Office. These contact details are also listed in the funding opportunity on Funding Finder. Please note that the Met Office will not comment on the quality, or show preference, for any application.

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