



Funding opportunity

# UKRI systems approaches to advance the UK's transition to net zero: outline

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Closed
<b>Funders:</b>	UK Research and Innovation, <a href="#">Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)</a> , <a href="#">Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)</a> , <a href="#">Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)</a> , <a href="#">Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)</a> , <a href="#">Innovate UK</a> , <a href="#">Medical Research Council (MRC)</a> , <a href="#">Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)</a> , <a href="#">Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Total fund:</b>	£9,250,000
<b>Maximum award:</b>	£4,625,000
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<b>Closing date:</b>	26 March 2024 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 4 March 2024 - [see all updates](#)

Apply for funding to establish a flagship transdisciplinary research programme in system approaches to advance the UK's transition to net zero.

This investment will support up to two impact driven research programmes to deliver world leading co-created cross-cutting research into the development

and implementation of systems approaches to net zero.

The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £5.78 million UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will fund 80% of the FEC (£4.62 million). The funding duration is for up to 60 months.

You must be based at a UK research organisation eligible for UKRI funding.

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## Who can apply

This outline funding opportunity contributes to addressing the UKRI Building a Green Future strategic theme and is being administered by Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) on behalf of UKRI.

Applicants from across UKRI remit are eligible to lead or participate in a transdisciplinary research programme. You may only be a project lead on one application but may be involved in other applications.

Before applying for funding, check the [Eligibility of your organisation](#).

UKRI standard eligibility rules apply. For full details, visit [UKRI's eligibility page](#).

UKRI has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new UKRI Funding Service.

For full details, visit [Eligibility as an individual](#).

## Who is not eligible to apply

International co-investigators are not permitted as part of this funding opportunity. International collaborators can be listed as project partners.

Businesses are not eligible applicant organisations as part of this funding opportunity, they are expected to be listed as project partners.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities

- flexible working
- alternative working patterns

Find out more about [equality, diversity and inclusion at UKRI](#).

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## What we're looking for

### Aim

Through this funding opportunity UKRI aims to drive the realisation of a just, prosperous, sustainable and resilient net zero transition, removing barriers to delivery and supporting the reduction and mitigation of unintended consequences.

The objectives of the funding opportunity are to:

- support up to two flagship five-year transdisciplinary research programmes in systems approaches to advance the UK's transition to net zero which have stakeholder engagement and co-creation at their core
- advance the UK's transition to net zero through the increased use of systems approaches

### Scope

The funding opportunity will focus on the delivery of world leading cross-cutting research into the development and implementation of systems approaches to advance the UK's transition to net zero.

Research programmes will:

- deliver a stakeholder co-created programme of research that directly advances the UK's net zero transition
- set the transition in a broader context focusing on the interactions between net zero drivers and broader environmental, social, political, economic and security outcomes to deliver an equitable, prosperous, sustainable and resilient net zero future
- deliver world leading transdisciplinary, collaborative, cross-cutting research into the development and implementation of integrated quantitative or qualitative (or both) systems approaches which will deliver actionable insights for key stakeholders from the increased understanding and analysis of multiple complex systems and the interactions between them to support the UK's transition to net zero
- collaborate with stakeholders, including government (local and national), businesses and individuals, to understand, consider, and support the adoption of the developed approaches

- prioritise research and innovation challenges with the greatest potential to support evidence-based decision making by stakeholders and future planning under uncertainty to support the removal of barriers to delivery, identify and mitigate unintended consequences and drive a coordinated transition to net zero
- demonstrate the opportunity, benefits, barriers, and limitations to taking a systems approach and deliver actionable insights and real-world impact on the pathway to net zero within the life of the programme in one or more test case areas which have been co-created with relevant stakeholders

Research programmes should:

- build a transdisciplinary, inclusive team focused on a clear strategic vision to enable systems approaches and the many benefits this can bring to the UK's net zero transition
- embed stakeholder engagement and co-creation throughout the life of the programme ensuring potential beneficiaries are involved in designing the research programme
- have identified clear pathways to accelerate impact and enable translation of research outcomes into stakeholder practice
- deliver practical and timely actionable insights to key stakeholders and enable beneficiaries to realise real-world impacts on the pathway to net zero within the lifetime of the grant
- act as an advocate for systems approaches and support the UK academic and stakeholder community to increase the use of systems approaches, strengthening collaboration between academia, business and policy stakeholders
- support capacity building and skills development across and beyond the research programme
- embed consideration of responsible research and innovation, including environmental sustainability, and equality, diversity and inclusion, in terms of the programme of research that is carried out and the outcomes it intends to have, throughout the programme
- develop key performance indicators and metrics of success which are reviewed and managed throughout the lifetime of the programme
- bring together the right people and organisations from places across the UK, to tackle the challenges relevant to the chosen research programme

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.

## Systems approaches

There is no single way of ‘taking a systems approach’. Systems approaches are frameworks or methodologies focused on understanding the whole system and exploring the interconnections within and between systems. Systems approaches recognise the complexity of the interactions between different unpredictable and ever-changing elements, actors and drivers at different scales from a sector to a business, a region or a country. They enable a new way of approaching the complexity of how technology, infrastructure, economics, governance and, crucially, individual and social behaviours and attitudes shape the world around us.

The [Go Science Systems Thinking journey \(PDF 308KB\)](#), and the [Royal Academy of Engineering Net Zero: A Systems perspective on the climate challenge \(PDF, 744KB\)](#), may be useful references.

There are a vast array of tools already available to support taking a systems approach to the net zero transition including metrics, models, data analysis, analytical frameworks, and digital tools. Research programmes supported by this opportunity are expected to build on this existing capability to:

- develop integrated quantitative or qualitative (or both) systems approaches which deliver actionable insights in the transition to net zero from the understanding and analysis of multiple complex systems and the interactions between them
- collaborate with stakeholders to understand, consider, and support the implementation and adoption of the developed approaches

Developing and implementing integrated quantitative or qualitative transdisciplinary systems approaches to net zero is a complex research challenge which may involve:

- the development of new metrics, models, data analysis, analytical frameworks, or digital tools
- the integration of existing tools
- or a combination of both

Identifying a cross-cutting research challenge or challenges to focus on will be up to applicants but they must define the expected outcomes and demonstrate:

- the potential for cross-cutting impact, delivering a step change in actionable insight, understanding and analysis of multiple interacting systems to support evidence-based decision making and planning, and advance a net zero transition
- the need for a transdisciplinary approach and evidence of stakeholder co-creation of the programme of research
- knowledge of, and engagement with, the potential beneficiaries and end users of the developed approaches
- evidence of stakeholder involvement in the creation of the research challenges and plans to collaborate with them to support implementation and

adoption of the developed approaches

- the potential for application to a range of sectors or situations and the consideration of the interactions between three or more of the following types of systems: technological, economic, political, social, and environmental

Core research challenges which are only applicable to a single sector or situation, or only consider one or two types of system (technological, economic, political, social, or environmental) will be out of scope.

You will not be bound to a UK system but will be expected to demonstrate how the research will advance the UK's net zero transition and realisation of carbon targets.

By way of illustration, but with no suggestion of priority, example hypothetical research challenges could be the development and implementation of quantitative or qualitative (or both) systems approaches:

- to explore multiple system dynamics and interactions between sectors in the transition to net zero
- to systematically assess the effects of net zero interventions on multiple outcomes, including surfacing and measuring co-benefits
- to enable the modelling and comparison of different net zero trajectories and the various impacts they may have now and under future uncertainty

## Test cases

Research programmes must co-create one or more test case areas with stakeholders and end users. What these test cases are will be up to applicants, but they must:

- test the systems approaches developed, using them on a real-world examples to deliver practical and timely actionable insights for key stakeholders and beneficiaries
- be used to demonstrate the value and limitations of the developed approaches to broader stakeholders, accelerating further adoption and supporting understanding of how a systems approach can be adopted and embedded by stakeholders
- be demonstrably co-created with beneficiaries and end users
- have the potential to enable beneficiaries to realise real-world impacts on the pathway to net zero within the lifetime of the grant

By way of illustration, but with no suggestion of priority, hypothetical examples of test cases could be:

- working with a local government, service providers and the public to co-create a framework for making evidenced based investment decisions which deliver on net zero goals within a broader context. Considering for example,

the local built environment, transport systems, its energy mix, and industries while maximising sustainability, economic viability, and social inclusion

- working with an employer to co-create a model and framework which could be used to provide a consistent understanding of the carbon footprint of their estates including energy and transport system dependencies. Embedding a systematic consideration of the environmental, social, and economic implications in plans to reduce it

## Co-creation and stakeholder engagement

To maximise impact, co-creation and engagement with stakeholder and end users is expected to be embedded throughout the research programmes.

No single actor can deliver net zero alone. Success relies on collective action. Programmes should consider involving a range of stakeholders from across industry, user groups, policy, the third sector and, where appropriate, the public.

At the outline stage applicants are expected to:

- be able to define who key stakeholders for their planned programme will be and how they will benefit from the research outputs
- detail the collaboration, engagement and if applicable co-creation which has informed the outline proposal
- explain how they will engage stakeholders and further co-create the research challenges and planned test cases in the development of their full proposal

At the full stage applicants are expected to:

- be able to define who key stakeholders for their planned programme will be and how they will benefit from the research outputs
- be able to demonstrate how they have engaged stakeholders and end users and co-created the research challenges and planned test cases in their full proposal
- explain how they will further engage existing and new stakeholders and embed co-creation throughout the research programme

Although not an exhaustive list it is anticipated that beneficiaries of the programme outputs may include, policymakers, local government, public bodies, regulators and businesses.

There is no minimum leverage expectation or number of partners but you will be expected to demonstrate genuine engagement and involvement from relevant and necessary project partners to deliver the proposed research.

## Transdisciplinary team

Programmes must build an appropriate transdisciplinary team bringing together academic and broader stakeholders from across UKRI's remit. Proposals which

do not bring together different disciplines alongside stakeholder involvement will be out of scope.

In the context of this opportunity novelty, excellence and quality is likely to primarily come from bringing together expertise and approaches from different discipline areas.

## Governance and monitoring

The leadership team of each research programme will be expected to set up appropriate governance arrangements to facilitate successful programme delivery. It is expected that a programme advisory board will be set up to inform the strategic direction of the programme and support growth in stakeholder engagement. Including ongoing development of an effective user engagement strategy.

It is expected that the advisory board should meet at least biannually and include key academics, businesses and investors, relevant policy officials and other stakeholders. A UKRI representative, who will be appointed by UKRI, will sit on this advisory board. Equality, diversity and inclusion should be considered when setting up the governance structure of the research programme.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning will be a key component of the programme, and we will arrange occasions for the programmes to share best practice, common challenges and learnings.

## Reporting

Grant holders will be required to report on the progress of the research programmes to UKRI annually through ResearchFish in line with standard UKRI grant terms and conditions. This programme will report into the UKRI Building a Green Future (BaGF) programme board.

For more information on the background of this funding opportunity, go to the 'Additional information' section.

## Duration

The duration of this award is for up to five years.

Projects must start on 1 February 2025.

## Funding available

The FEC of your project can be up to £5.78 million. UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC (£4.62 million).

## What we will fund

You can request funding for costs such as:



- a contribution to the salary of the project lead and project co-lead
- support for other posts such as research and technical staff
- research consumables
- travel costs
- collaboration and stakeholder engagement
- impact and knowledge exchange activities
- estates and indirect costs
- flexible research funding

## What we will not fund

We will not fund:

- applications that only cover one research council remit or are applied to only one sector
- studentships
- equipment
- international co-investigators
- business costs

## Supporting skills and talent

We encourage you to follow the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and the [Technician Commitment](#).

## International collaboration

If your application includes international applicants, project partners or collaborators, visit [UKRI's trusted research and innovation](#) for more information on effective international collaboration.

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## How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UKRI Funding Service. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The project lead is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

## To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the project lead.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email [support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org)  
Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.
5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. You should:

- use images sparingly and only to convey important information that cannot easily be put into words
- insert each new image onto a new line
- provide a descriptive legend for each image immediately underneath it (this counts towards your word limit)
- ensure files are smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Watch our [research office webinars about the new Funding Service](#).

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- [how applicants use the Funding Service](#)
- [how research offices use the Funding Service](#)
- [how reviewers use the Funding Service](#)

## Deadline

UKRI must receive your application by 26 March 2024 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected. If an application is withdrawn prior to peer review or office rejected due to substantive errors in the application, it cannot be resubmitted to the opportunity.

## Personal data

### Processing personal data

UKRI, will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read [our privacy notice](#).

## Publication of outcomes

UKRI, will publish the summaries and applicants involved in the outlines that are being invited to submit full proposals.

If your full proposal application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the [UKRI Gateway to Research](#).

## Summary

Word limit: 550

In plain English, provide a summary we can use to identify the most suitable experts to assess your application.

We may make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, so make it suitable for a variety of readers, for example:

- opinion-formers
- policymakers
- the public
- the wider research community

### Guidance for writing a summary

Clearly describe your proposed work in terms of:

- context
- the challenge the project addresses
- aims and objectives
- potential applications and benefits

## Core team

List the key members of your outline application team and assign them roles from the following:

- project lead (PL)
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- researcher co-lead (RcL)

Only list one individual as project lead.

Find out more about [UKRI's core team roles in funding applications](#).

As this is an outline opportunity you will be permitted to add additional team members at the full stage. In the full application you can assign roles from the following:

- project lead (PL)
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- researcher co-lead (RcL)
- grant manager
- research and innovation associate
- visiting researcher
- specialist
- technician
- professional enabling staff

## Application questions

### Fit to opportunity

How does your proposal fit the aims and scope of this funding opportunity?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

The assessors require you to:

- explain the vision for your transdisciplinary research programme and the potential for it to deliver impact to support the UK's transition to an equitable, prosperous, sustainable and resilient UK net zero future
- explain the expected outcomes of the programme and describe how your proposed programme will lead to the development, implementation and adoption of systems approaches which will produce actionable insights to drive the UK's net zero transition
- describe potential test case studies including how these will be co-created to deliver real-world impact on the pathway to net zero within the lifetime of the programme

Create a document that includes your responses to all criteria. The document should not be more than three sides of A4, single spaced in paper in 11-point Arial (or equivalent sans serif font) with margins of at least 2cm. You may include images, graphs, tables.

For the file name, use the unique Funding Service number the system gives you when you create an application, followed by the words 'fit to opportunity'.

Save this document as a single PDF file, no bigger than 5MB. Unless specifically requested, please do not include any sensitive data within the attachment.

If the attachment does not meet these requirements, the application will be rejected.

The Funding Service will provide document upload details when you apply.

## **Application team**

Word limit: 1,000

How will the application team deliver the proposed transdisciplinary research programme?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Please describe:

- the application teams' relevant research experience and skills to develop and deliver the proposed transdisciplinary research programme
- where gaps in the team exist, you should articulate how you plan to identify and embed additional expertise

The core leadership team should consist of the project lead (programme director) and the project co-leads (co-investigators) identified on this outline application. There will be scope to expand this team and include new collaborators on the full application and you will be able to add further detail.

## **Co-creation and stakeholder engagement**

Word limit: 1,500

How will you embed co-creation with stakeholders throughout your research programme to maximise the real-world impact on the UK's transition to net zero?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Please describe:

- how your proposed transdisciplinary team of researchers and stakeholders will be assembled to work collaboratively towards the joint vision
- how stakeholders and beneficiaries have been involved through collaboration and engagement in the creation of the programme and how they are expected to benefit from the research outputs. Including naming existing and potential partners in policy, industry and user organisations
- how you will engage new and existing stakeholders and further co-create the research challenges, planned test cases and impact and translation pathways throughout the life of the programme

Project partner details are not required to be included at the outline stage. Existing and potential partnerships should be described as part of the response to this section.

## **References**

Word limit: 500

List the references you have used to support your application.

### **What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Include all references in this section, not in the rest of the application questions.

You should not include any other information in this section.

We advise you not to include hyperlinks, as assessors are not obliged to access the information they lead to or consider it in their assessment of your application.

If linking to web resources, to maintain the information's integrity, include persistent identifiers (such as digital object identifiers) where possible.

You must not include links to web resources to extend your application.

## **Outline costs**

What are the expected programme costs?

### **What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Demonstrate briefly that the outline research proposed programme fits within the funding available.

Provide the approximate total values in GBP (£) for the expected directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect costs and exceptions.

If successful, you will be asked to expand on the information you provide in this section at the full application stage. The costs will only be able to change by 10% between the outline and full proposal and must not exceed the maximum value allowed for each programme.

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# How we will assess your application

## Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

There will be a two-stage assessment process for this funding opportunity:

- outline application
- full application

In the event of this funding opportunity being substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable, UKRI reserve the right to modify the assessment process.

### Stage one: outline application

Applications submitted to this funding opportunity will all be considered by an expert panel.

The outline panel will evaluate applications with reference to the assessment criteria given below.

Following the outline stage, the panels and UKRI will take into account the portfolio, geographic and subject matter diversity of applications received when deciding which applicants to invite to submit full applications.

Please note that the vision for the programme will not be allowed to change significantly between the outline and full application stages and the costs will only be able to change by 10% and must not exceed the maximum value allowed for each programme.

Upon completion of the outline stage, titles of applications that are invited to full application will be published online along with summary and details of the application team, including their names. We encourage the addition of further collaborators and project partners between outline and full proposal.

### Assessment criteria for the outline applications

The criteria we will assess your application against are:

- fit to opportunity
- application team
- co-creation and engagement with proposed stakeholders

Resources are indicative only and will not be subject to assessment at the outline stage.

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

## **Stage two: full applications**

Only invited applications will be eligible to submit a full application via a separate funding opportunity.

A day workshop for successful applicants from the outline stage will take place in June 2024. The workshop is to support stakeholder engagement to strengthen the planned bids. Providing an opportunity to find new collaborators, understand stakeholder drivers and refine plans.

Full applications will be considered by an expert interview panel against the full opportunity assessment criteria listed below.

The interview panel will meet prior to the interviews to identify any specific questions they will ask the applicants to answer at the panel interview. These will be in addition to the standard question set the panel will develop to explore the assessment criteria. The application specific questions will be circulated to applicants two weeks ahead of the panel interview, so they are able to prepare their responses.

We expect invited full application interviews to be held in October 2024.

UKRI will make the final funding decision. UKRI will take into account the portfolio, geographic and subject matter diversity of applications when making funding decisions.

## **Feedback**

Feedback will be provided at both stages only if specifically requested by the panel.

## **Principles of assessment**

We support the [San Francisco declaration on research assessment](#) and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#).

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

## **Assessment criteria for the full proposals**

The criteria we will assess invited full application against 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)
  - environmental sustainability
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## Contact details

### Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren't provided on this page

Important note: The helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UKRI Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline or technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding Finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility, content or remit of a funding opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

### Contact details

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.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact [energyanddecarbonisation@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:energyanddecarbonisation@epsrc.ukri.org)

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: [support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org)

Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the

application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

Find out more information on [submitting an application](#).

## Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, please contact [tfschangeepsr@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:tfschangeepsr@epsrc.ukri.org)

Include in the subject line: [the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number].

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read [UKRI's privacy notice](#).

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## Additional info

### Background

This funding opportunity delivers to [UKRI's Strategy 2022 to 2027: Transforming Tomorrow Together](#), to support world-class ideas, advancing the frontiers of human knowledge and innovation by enabling the UK to seize opportunities from emerging research trends, transdisciplinary approaches and new concepts and markets. This funding opportunity is supported through UKRI's strategic theme 'Building a Green Future', one of the five strategic themes of UKRI which look to harness the full power of the UK's research and innovation system to address major national and global challenges.

The [Building a Green Future strategic theme](#) aims to accelerate the green economy by supporting research and innovation that delivers on national priorities and unlocks solutions essential to achieving net zero in the UK by 2050.

UKRI is working with UK government departments, business and internationally to improve the health of our environment, transform behaviours and policy to deliver net zero and secure prosperity across the whole of the UK. Through our whole systems solutions we will support growth of business, jobs, skills and sustainable, resilient public services and infrastructure, addressing environmental and net zero challenges in all sectors of the economy. We are developing solutions necessary to meet our net zero targets and accelerate the UK's transition to a secure and prosperous green economy.

## Webinar for potential applicants

We held a webinar on 9 February 2024 at 1:00pm UK time. This provided more information about the funding opportunity and a chance to ask questions.

[Webinar slides \(PDF, 1MB\)](#)

[Webinar questions and answers \(PDF, 151KB\)](#)

## Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing.

Where disruptions have occurred, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

## Grant additional conditions (GAC)

Grants are awarded under the standard [UKRI grant terms and conditions](#). In addition to these, the following additional grant conditions will be applied. We reserve the right to amend these or add further conditions, up to the point of issuing the grant. Full details of the terms and conditions applying to your award will be listed in the grant offer letter.

### **GAC 1: fixed start date**

Notwithstanding RGC 5.2 starting procedures, this grant has a fixed start date of 1 February 2025, no slippage of this date will be permitted. Expenditure may be incurred prior to the start of the grant and be subsequently charged to the grant, provided that it does not precede the date of the offer letter.

## **GAC 2: acknowledging your funding**

In addition to RGC 12.4 publication and acknowledgement of support, you must refer to the UKRI Building a Green Future funding. This includes the UKRI, Council specific and other partners (where applicable – delete as appropriate to the investment) logo and relevant branding on all online or printed materials (including press releases, posters, exhibition materials and other publications) related to activities funded by this grant.

Acknowledgement of funding should be a sentence with the funding agency written out in full, followed by the grant number in square brackets (if you have one). For example:

‘This work was supported by UK Research and Innovation Building a Green Future strategic theme [and others as required] [grant number xxxx]’.

If your research has supported the development of patents or exploitable intellectual property your research organisation must make sure that your funder is fully acknowledged.

## **GAC 3: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**

In addition to RGC 3.4, you are expected to prepare a full EDI plan for the duration of this grant to demonstrate best practice in EDI throughout the lifetime of this funding award. This must be produced within three months of your start date and progress against this plan will be monitored by our project officer through the grant reporting process.

## **GAC 4: user engagement strategy**

You must develop and execute a strategy for engaging with potential users of the research funded in the project. This strategy should be reviewed and updated regularly as part of the formal management and reporting process agreed for this grant.

## **GAC 5: project officer appointment**

We will nominate a member of our staff (the project officer) who will be your primary point of contact. The project officer will ensure that the project is being run in accordance with the terms and conditions and in line with financial due diligence.

The project officer should have access to all documentation of governance and reporting bodies, in so far as it relates to the administration and application of the grant. As funding administrators, all UKRI staff have agreed to maintain the confidentiality required by all parties involved in our funded research.

## **GAC 6: management structure**

You should have established an appropriate management structure with clear lines of responsibility and authority to oversee the day to day running of the project. This should be in place within six months of the start date of the grant. The terms of reference and management structure, must be approved by us in advance. As must any changes to this structure. The project officer will be our main contact with the project, and must receive all meeting minutes of the management committees. We reserve the right to attend any meetings.

## **GAC 7: advisory board appointment**

This grant must establish and run an independent advisory board, or equivalent body, to oversee the running of the project and provide advice on the strategic direction and activities of the project.

The terms of reference and membership of this group (at least 50% independent membership and an independent chair) should be agreed with us. The project officer will also be expected to attend and participate in advisory board and other appropriate meetings for the duration of the grant.

## **GAC 8: project review**

In addition to the requirements set out in standard UKRI grant conditions RGC 7.4 research monitoring and evaluation and RGC 7.5 disclosure and inspection, we reserve the right to instigate a review of all or part of the grant at any stage during the lifetime of the award as well as after the grant has finished.

## **GAC 9: progress reports**

In addition to the requirements set out in RGC 7.4.3, You are responsible for providing annual progress reports against non-financial performance metrics.

## **GAC 10: cost overrun**

We will not be responsible for any cost overrun incurred during the course of this grant. You will be required to make up any shortfall from alternative sources.

## **GAC 11: collaboration agreements**

Where the grant is associated with more than one research organisation or other project partners, a formal collaboration agreement must be in place with the basis of collaboration between the organisations including the following:

- the process of the flexible allocation of resources throughout the project
- ownership of intellectual property
- rights to exploitation

It is your responsibility to put such an agreement in place by 1 May 2025.

The terms of collaboration agreements must not conflict with the UKRI terms and conditions.

We must be informed within three months of the start of the grant, that the collaboration agreement is in place and has been signed by all partners or the progress made (unless some alternative timeline has been agreed with us beforehand).

If sufficient progress has not been made within three months of the start of the grant, we reserve the right to enact RGC 11.1.

Arrangements for collaboration or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with academic custom and practice.

### **GAC 13: change of project lead**

In addition to RGC 7.3, this award is made on condition that any requests to change the grant holder or project co-lead will require prior approval from us.

We must be contacted in writing and prior approval sought before this change can be made. To facilitate any changes of this nature the case must be made for why a new principal investigator is required.

Requests for such a change are to be submitted via the grant maintenance facility in Joint Electronic System (Je-S). We will then consider and inform you of their decision.

## **Responsible innovation**

UKRI is fully committed to develop and promote responsible innovation. Research has the ability to not only produce understanding, knowledge and value, but also unintended consequences, questions, ethical dilemmas and, at times, unexpected social transformations.

We recognise that we have a duty of care to promote approaches to responsible innovation that will initiate ongoing reflection about the potential ethical and societal implications of the research that we sponsor and to encourage our research community to do likewise. Therefore, applicants are expected to work within the [EPSRC framework for responsible innovation](#).

Applicants planning to include international collaborators on their proposal should visit Trusted Research for information and advice on [how to get the most out of international collaboration while protecting intellectual property, sensitive research and personal information](#). Grant holders will be expected to engage with the relevant regulatory bodies where concerns may arise under the [National Security and Investment Act](#). Aspects of bias, privacy, security, and ethics should be considered where appropriate.

## **Sustainability**

UKRI's environmental sustainability strategy lays out our ambition to actively lead environmental sustainability across our sectors. This includes a vision to ensure that all major investment and funding decisions we make are directly informed by environmental sustainability, recognising environmental benefits as well as potential for environmental harm.

In alignment with this, UKRI is tackling the challenge of environmental sustainability through our 'building a green future' strategic theme, which aims to develop whole systems solutions to improve the health of our environment and deliver net zero, securing prosperity across the whole of the UK.

Environmental sustainability is a broad term but may include consideration of such broad areas as:

- reducing carbon emissions
- protecting and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity
- waste or pollution elimination
- resource efficiency and a circular economy

UKRI expects projects to embed careful consideration of environmental sustainability at all stages of the research and innovation process and throughout the lifetime of the project. Projects should ensure that environmental impact and mitigation of the proposed research approaches and hub operations, as well as the associated project outputs and outcomes is considered. Projects must also seek opportunities to influence others and leave a legacy of environmental sustainability within the broader operations of your academic and industry partners.

## Supporting documents

[EIA assessment form \(DOCX, 72.6KB\)](#)

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## Updates

### 4 March 2024

Under 'Additional info', have updated the 'Webinar for potential applicants' section text and added in the webinar slides and questions and answers document links.

## Timeline

○ 25 January 2024 9:00am

Outline opening date

**9 February 2024 1:00pm**

Webinar

**26 March 2024 4:00pm**

Outline closing date

**end of May 2024**

Outline decisions

**June 2024**

Invited full proposal applicant workshop

**mid June 2024**

Invited full opening date

**early September 2024**

Invited full closing date

## Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

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<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ukri-systems-approaches-to-advance-the-uks-transition-to-net-zero>