Funding opportunity

Critical mass programmes to drive a sustainable future

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	**Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)**
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£22,725,000
Maximum award:	£5,718,750
Publication date:	10 December 2024
Opening date:	7 January 2025 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	4 March 2025 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 26 February 2025 - **see all updates**

Apply for five years of funding to support critical-mass transdisciplinary research programs that drive the transition to sustainable technologies and operations, clean energy, circular materials or interseasonal energy storage (IES) beyond hydrogen. Projects will apply a systems approach to optimise outcomes for UK prosperity, society and environment and develop clear pathways for impact and translation to the UK's mid-to-long term future, beyond 2030.

EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic cost (FEC). The FEC of your project can be up to £5,718,750, or £3,000,00 if targeting the IES area.

Who can apply

To lead a project, you must be based at an eligible organisation. **Check if your organisation is eligible**

EPSRC standard eligibility rules apply. For full details, visit **EPSRC's eligibility page**.

Who is eligible to apply

Applications must be majority within EPSRC's remit and must be within the scope of this funding opportunity. We will reject applications deemed to have a majority remit within another UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) council. We reserve the right to make such remit decisions without reference to peer review.

Any individual may only submit one application overall as project lead, but an individual is permittable to appear as a project co-lead on other applications in this funding opportunity.

Expression of interest

It is mandatory to submit an expression of interest (EoI) to be eligible for this funding opportunity. You must submit your EoI no later than 4 March 2025 at 4:00pm UK time.

Applicants shortlisted by EPSRC staff, will receive an invitation to submit a full stage application from 1 May 2025 9:00am UK time.

All applications, including those targeting the IES highlight area, will follow the same assessment process and criteria. £9,000,000 out of the total £22,725,000 fund of this opportunity has been ring-fenced to support multiple projects in the IES highlight area.

Who is not eligible to apply

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

International applicants

The project co-lead (international) (PcL (I)) role should only be used for applications making use of the **UKRI-RCN Money Follows Cooperation agreement** or the **UKRI-IIASA agreement**. We do not otherwise accept PcL (I) applicants.

Resubmissions

We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI or any other funder.

Find out more about **EPSRC's resubmissions policy**.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

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

We would like to encourage you to ensure you consider how you will support capacity building and skills development across and beyond the research programme when putting together your team, and planning your activities and outcomes, including fostering a nurturing research culture and ensuring EDI principles are integrated in all parts of the application.

Find out more about **equality, diversity and inclusion at EPSRC**.

UKRI can offer **disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders** during the application and assessment process.

What we're looking for

Aim

The net zero economy presents one of the most significant growth opportunities of the 21st century, with an ever-growing demand for securing the supply and establishment of sustainable products and operations and clean energy in the UK. A window of opportunity therefore presents itself for discovering and informing equitable and resilient approaches to the solutions required by the UK's mid-to-long term future.

This funding opportunity seeks to support up to three critical mass five-year transdisciplinary research programmes that will directly contribute to the shift away from environmentally detrimental materials, technologies, energy solutions and operations to more sustainable, clean and circular alternatives.

This funding opportunity will also support multiple programmes targeting the highlight area of interseasonal energy storage (IES) beyond hydrogen. £9 million of the £22.7 million total fund of this funding opportunity, has been ring-fenced to support the IES highlight area, with the aim of developing the critical solutions needed to store energy in large volumes from season to season in ways that are safe, economical and efficient, to enable the UK to take best advantage of the growth in renewable energy generation. This will enable us to address a breadth of challenges in this area and build capacity in interseasonal energy storage beyond hydrogen.

This funding opportunity is intended as a pilot for EPSRC. We will conduct review and evaluation activities during and after the funding opportunity to inform the targeted priorities of any potential future funding rounds. We welcome any community feedback on any aspect of this funding opportunity – please refer to the 'Contact details' section.

Scope

Programmes will deliver innovative and transformative research and innovation to support the UK's medium to long term sustainable aims to establish the sustainable and net zero future beyond 2030. Themes of focus may include but are not limited to:

- advanced renewable energy technologies with potential to play a part in the energy transition or revisions of existing technologies that provide more sustainable solutions
- decarbonised, sustainable transport, including land, air, sea and cross modal
- sustainable next generation manufacturing technologies, processes and systems
- technologies to enable a circular economy, in particular reuse, refurbish, remanufacture and longer-in-life solutions

We recognise that delivering a sustainable, prosperous and resilient future is complex and high-risk, requiring the integration of multiple stakeholders and broad interdisciplinary teams across and beyond the remit of EPSRC. These critical mass investments will provide the scale, flexibility and length of award necessary to support this.

For applications targeting the IES highlight area, this could include research focused on, but not limited to:

- electrochemical storage
- thermal storage
- gravitational (potential energy) storage
- whole system including the production of the storage technology, storage integration, and use of the energy storage system

You must submit an expression of interest (EoI), no later than 4 March 2025 at 4:00pm UK time to be eligible for this funding opportunity. Please refer to the 'How to apply' and 'How we will assess your application' sections to learn more on the EoI process and what it must detail.

Opportunity objectives

Successful programmes will address EPSRC's strategic aims through the following objectives:

- deliver high quality, novel engineering and physical sciences (EPS) research addressing timely and strategically important challenges demonstrably driven directly by the vision of a net zero and sustainable UK and the broader benefits this will bring to society, the economy and the environment
- maximise demonstrable impact from the programme in the medium and longer term through engagement, collaboration and co-creation with industrial, policy and third sector stakeholders and an active consideration of the wider system in which the programme's research and planned outputs exist
- maximise quality and impact of the programme through collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches and co-creation with new and existing stakeholders, both academic and non-academic, across and beyond EPSRC's remit
- complement existing EPSRC and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) investments to significantly grow the UK's EPS capacity and capability in the area
- embed careful consideration of environmental sustainability in all proposed project outputs and outcomes, research approaches and programme operations throughout the lifetime of the programme

Duration

The maximum duration of this award is five years.

The earliest start date for programmes will be in February 2026

Funding available

For applications targeting the IES highlight area, the full economic cost (FEC) of your project can only be up to £3 million. We will fund 80% of the FEC (that is an EPSRC contribution of up to £2.4 million).

For all other applications, the FEC of your programme can be up to £5.7 million. We will fund 80% of the FEC (that is an EPSRC contribution of up to £4.6 million).

What we will fund

This funding opportunity will support programmes for which the core vision and primary research challenge are driven directly by the challenges of delivering a shift away from environmentally detrimental materials, technologies and operations to more sustainable and circular alternatives, and clean energy solutions.

Programmes where driving a sustainable and net zero future from 2030 onwards is not the core focus and vision are not eligible for this funding opportunity, and you should consider alternative funding opportunities. The proposed research must demonstrably lie primarily within EPSRC's remit. However, involvement of researchers from other disciplines (including those from other UKRI councils) is welcome and encouraged where necessary for the programme. Sustainability research is often interdisciplinary by necessity, so applicants are expected to co-create solutions between different disciplines, within and beyond EPSRC's remit, as appropriate.

We reserve the right to make such remit decisions without reference to peer review.

Programmes must:

- address one or more timely research challenge or challenges focused on a single strategically important theme which is driven directly by the vision of the transition to sustainable, clean and circular materials, technologies, energy and operations in the UK's mid-to-long term future from 2030 onwards
- demonstrate a coherent long-term strategic vison and bring together a collaborative and world-leading academic team with relevant stakeholders to address it
- take a systems approach, considering the wider context in which the proposed research and research outcomes will sit and the trade-offs and unintended consequences of the research outcomes
- demonstrate co-creation and collaboration with stakeholders including industry, policy and the third sector to identify timely and strategically important research challenges
- drive added value as a core focus of the programme by demonstrating synergistic connectivity between partners, disciplines, and workstreams
- identify and embed clear, realistic and proportionate impact and translation pathways which will maximise demonstrable impact from the programme in the medium and longer term
- use the scale, flexibility and length of the funding to deliver UK-wide national leadership and advocacy and embed creativity and agility into the plans for the programme
- develop the skills of the researchers and partners involved, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the programme, as well as supporting development and training for early career researchers

- embed environmental sustainability throughout the programme, both in research outcomes and in programme operations

You must be able to articulate how you will interact with existing investments and demonstrate how your work will compliment and add value to the existing research and innovation landscape.

Research programmes should:

- look to integrate leading-edge analysis of whole life cycle, social engagement or behavioural science, alongside engineering, physical, and environmental science approaches to enhance the translatability of findings into viable solutions
- build upon existing UKRI research investments, from fundamental to applied, avoiding duplication, competition, and ensuring collaboration where applicable, building upon or partnering with existing UK and 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
- anticipate the need for freedom to respond quickly to new arising challenges, bring in new collaborators, attract more funding, and cross-fertilise ideas

Equipment (up to £400,000 per item)

Quotes for equipment do not need to be included in your application, but please retain quotes for equipment costing more than £138,000 as we may ask for these at post-panel stage before releasing funds.

What we will not fund

We will not fund programmes where:

- the majority of the research is outside of EPSRC remit. Proposals deemed to not be within EPSRC remit will be rejected
- a sustainable future is a beneficiary or potential impact pathway rather than the core focus of the programme. This will be deemed out of scope by the outline panel and you will not be invited to submit a full proposal

Due to previous recent UKRI investment activity, the primary focus should not be on:

- hydrogen production or systems integration
- hydrogen based interseasonal energy storage
- nuclear fission
- nuclear fusion
- industrial decarbonisation
- healthcare manufacturing

Or areas already supported by the programmes successfully funded through:

- **[UKRI's 'Transforming Foundation Industries Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#)**
- **[Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge](#)**
- **[Sustainable Industrial Futures](#)**
- **[Network Pluses in Energy to form next generation Supergen Hubs](#)**
- **[Hydrogen Hubs](#)**
- **[UK National Clean Maritime Research Hub](#)**
- **[Research Hub for Decarbonised Adaptable and Resilient Transport Infrastructures (DARe)](#)**

The onus is on you to demonstrate additionality to the portfolio.

Programmes addressing areas covered by investments made in manufacturing research hubs for a sustainable future (rounds **[one](#)**, **[two](#)** and **[three](#)**) are not excluded from this funding opportunity. However, you must demonstrate how your project would be complementary to these and other UKRI investments and add value to the broader research and innovation landscape.

Definitions

Transdisciplinary research

Transdisciplinary research has various definitions but is often defined as research that transgresses boundaries between disciplinary knowledge or integrates different bodies of knowledge and actively co-creates knowledge between academic and societal partners such as policymakers or business.

We encourage programmes to build an appropriate team that brings 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.

Systems approach

Programmes must evaluate the context of the wider system within which the proposed research outputs would sit to enable consideration of the economic, environmental and social trade-offs, risks and mitigations associated with different approaches. You are not asked to research the entire system or necessarily carry out systems engineering but should consider:

- the systems that your work will sit within and interact with, and the feedback loops and unintended consequences this may generate. These may be upstream or downstream of your system and at similar or different scales
- the wider social, legal, regulatory, economic and environmental context

Such considerations may include questions such as:

- how does your research influence or impact other parts of the system?
- how could other systems influence or impact your material, technology or operation?
- what further research might be needed for your technology or process to have the desired impact in a current or future system? Your programme may not necessarily deliver this further research, but it should look to identify it and consider the implications of it

Programmes should consider the risks, costs and trade-offs associated with different materials, technologies and processes, using tools and approaches such as life cycle analysis and impact assessments where appropriate.

Co-creation and stakeholder engagement

With this funding opportunity we aim to maximise impact through engagement, collaboration and co-creation with industrial, policy and third sector stakeholders.

Programmes should have a strategy for engaging with stakeholders, both academic and non-academic, across and beyond EPSRC's remit. This should include plans to interact with a new and emerging range of relevant collaborators throughout the lifetime of the grant. You should provide clear evidence of genuine, substantive partnerships, with co-creation and co-delivery of projects and activities in addition to financial contributions.

There is no minimum leverage or number of partners that we require but appropriate evidence beyond standard letters of support is required to demonstrate true co-creation and engagement. This could include but is not limited to industry member time, knowledge exchange, drawing on expertise, experience and outcomes, collaborating on data use and collection, use cases, secondments and so on. However, we do expect leverage to grow over the lifetime of the programme as stakeholder relationships progress and new partnerships are formed.

You should consider how you will embed stakeholder interactions in the programme's governance structure. In particular, advice from users must be appropriately utilised in the decision-making strategy to grow diverse user engagement, both in terms of number of users and value of contributions to the programme (financial and in-kind). Relationships with stakeholders should evolve as appropriate as the programme and the research develops.

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**.

Environmental 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 complex and there are often conflicting drivers. In this context EPSRC consider it to include consideration of such broad areas as:

- reducing greenhouse gases
- protecting and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity
- waste or pollution elimination
- energy and resource efficiency and circular economy

EPSRC (on behalf of UKRI) expects programmes to embed careful consideration of environmental sustainability at all stages of the research and innovation process and throughout the lifetime of the grant.

In particular, for this funding opportunity programmes should ensure that environmental impact and mitigation of the proposed research approaches and programme operations, as well as the associated project outputs and outcomes, is considered. Programmes must also seek opportunities to influence others and leave a legacy of environmental sustainability within the broader operations of their academic and industry partners.

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

UKRI is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our **TR&I Principles** set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

See **further guidance and information about TR&I**, including where you can find additional support.

How to apply

Expression of interest

We are running a mandatory expression of interest (EoI) stage as a measure of demand management to ensure alignment of applicant programmes with the scope and remit of our funding opportunity.

It is mandatory to submit an EoI to be eligible for this funding opportunity. You must submit your EoI no later than 4 March 2025 4:00pm UK time. Applicants shortlisted by EPSRC staff, will receive an invitation to submit a full stage application from 1 May 2025 9:00am UK time.

Submit your expression of interest

References

Applications should be self-contained, and hyperlinks should only be used to provide links directly to reference information. To ensure the information's integrity is maintained, where possible, persistent identifiers such as digital object identifiers should be used. Assessors are not required to access links to carry out assessment or recommend a funding decision. You should use your discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

References should be included in the appropriate question section of the application and be easily identifiable by the assessors for example (Smith, Research Paper, 2019).

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

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Use of generative AI tools to prepare funding applications is permitted, however, caution should be applied.

For more information see our policy on the **use of generative AI in application and assessment**.

Deadline

EPSRC must receive your EoI submission by 4 March 2025 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 EoI form, the system does not allow for amendments to your submission. If you wish to amend your EoI you should instead submit a new form, making it clear in the text this is the updated version and to disregard a previous submission. However, no such amendment submissions can be made following the EoI closing date. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected. If an application is withdrawn after the EoI closing date or office rejected, it cannot be resubmitted to the funding opportunity.

Personal data

Processing personal data

EPSRC, as part of UKRI, will need to collect some personal information to manage your UKRI 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**.

Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email **tfschangeepsrc@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**.

Publication of outcomes

EPSRC, as part of UKRI, will publish the outcomes of this funding opportunity at **EPSRC Funding Application Outcomes**.

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the **UKRI Gateway to Research**.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess all applications through the following process,

Mandatory expression of interest (EoI) stage

The EoI will consist of evaluation by EPSRC staff (see the 'EoI evaluation areas' section below). Applicants successfully shortlisted by EPSRC will be invited to submit a full stage application.

EoI evaluation areas

The EoI will request the following details:

- project lead name, affiliation and email address
- proposed host organisation
- project co-lead names
- if your submission is for the interseasonal storage highlight area (yes or no)
- a short summary of the proposed research vision and its objectives
- a short summary of how your programme will provide additionality to the current and foreseeable UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) portfolio
- how you would like us to contact you

You do not have to provide any indicative costs at this stage.

EoI submissions will be evaluated by EPSRC staff members internally after the closing date. This review will assess that:

- you meet our funding eligibility requirements
- the majority of the research is within EPSRC remit
- your application aligns to the scope and objectives of this funding opportunity
- a sustainable future is a core focus of the programme and not a mere beneficiary or potential impact pathway
- your programme will provide additionality to the current and foreseeable UKRI portfolio
- any applications with the same area of research focus, submitted into the same round of this funding opportunity, could be offered the opportunity to strengthen their consortia by forming a single full stage application with other applicants

Full stage application

EoIs deemed by EPSRC staff to be eligible for this funding opportunity will be shortlisted for invitation to submit a full stage application. You may not submit a full stage application if your EoI is not successfully shortlisted. EPSRC's decision will be final.

The full stage application will be reviewed by an expert panel that will provide comments to the applicant. There will then be the chance for applicant to respond to these comments.

Evaluation areas for full stage applications

It is anticipated that the following criteria will form the basis of assessment by the expert panel:

- Vision and Approach which will include that a sustainable future has been embedded as a core focus of the programme
- Applicant and team capacity to deliver
- Plans for taking a systems approach
- Co-creation and stakeholder engagement
- Resources requested, and the proposed management
- Ethical and responsible research and innovation considerations

More details, including assessment questions, will follow once the full stage of the funding opportunity opens in May 2025. This will be displayed under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

EPSRC expects to hold the full stage assessment and panel over the September to November period of 2025.

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

Prioritisation panel meeting

The expert panel will meet to evaluate the evidence from the application, panel comments and the applicant response to assess the quality of your application and rank it alongside other applications. The panel will make a funding recommendation to EPSRC.

EPSRC reserves the right to make remit decisions without reference to peer review. Feedback will not be provided for this stage of submission. After the successful EoIs have been selected to be shortlisted, EPSRC will contact you if other applicants have submitted proposals relevant to the same challenge area of focus within this round, such to advise if there are any buddying opportunities possible. However, no personal information, contact information, or content from your EoI will be shared to any other applicants without your specific consent prior.

Your data

EPSRC complies with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 (EU) GDPR). We process and handle personal information according to these regulations. The personal information that you provide on the EoI form will only be used for the processing of your application. The information will be viewed by EPSRC staff and those who are part of the decision-making process. Your information will not be used or shared for any other purpose without your specific consent.

EPSRC reserves the right to publish and share anonymized aggregated information with stakeholders. For further information on how your personal data is used, how we maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access that information we hold about you, please contact the UK Research and Innovation Information Rights team.

[Read the UKRI privacy notice](#)

Matched funding

There is no requirement for match funding from the organisations hosting the project lead, project co-leads or other staff employed on the grant. EPSRC advises panel members not to consider the level of matched university funding as a factor on which to base funding decisions. Project partners are expected to contribute to the project, either with cash or in-kind contributions.

Feedback

We will not be providing feedback with the outcome of your application at any stage during or after the assessment process.

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](#)**.

Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in peer review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard.

For more detail see our **[policy on the use of generative AI](#)**.

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 UK Research and Innovation (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 a 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 or content/remit of an 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 the team most relevant to your proposal. Please also include 'Critical Mass Programmes to drive a Sustainable Future' in the title of your email:

energyanddecarbonisation@epsrc.ukri.org

manufacturingandce@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**
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.

See further information on **submitting an application**.

Additional info

Research and innovation impact

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

Webinar for potential applicants

We held a webinar on 23 January 2025. This provided more information about the funding opportunity and a chance to ask questions. It included a presentation from EPSRC and a moderated question and answer panel.

It was not mandatory to attend the webinar to make an expression of interest submission.

Watch webinar recording on YouTube

Webinar slides (PDF, 2.5MB)

Read the webinar FAQs (PDF, 210KB)

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.

Supporting documents

[Equality Impact Assessment (PDF, 185KB)](#)

Updates

26 February 2025
Added the webinar FAQs PDF to the 'Additional info' section

3 February 2025
Link to webinar recording and webinar slides document added to the 'Additional info' section.

16 December 2024
Corrected a sentence under the 'What we will not fund' heading in the 'What we're looking for' section, from 'Due to previous recent UKRI investment activity, the primary focus is on:' to 'Due to previous recent UKRI investment activity, the primary focus should not be on:'.

Timeline

○ **7 January 2025 9:00am**

Expression of Interest opening date

○ **23 January 2025 2:00pm**

Webinar

○ **4 March 2025 4:00pm**

Expression of Interest closing date

○ **by 30 April 2025 5:00pm UK time**

Full stage invitations

○ **1 May 2025 9:00am**

Full stage (invite only) opening date

○ **17 July 2025 4:00pm**

Full stage (invite only) closing date

○ **September 2025**

Assessment by panel

○ **October 2025**
Project lead response

○ **November 2025**
Prioritisation panel meeting

○ **December 2025**
Funding decisions

○ **mid-February 2026**
Earliest start date for programmes

Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)