

Content from the webinar for potential applicants

A webinar for potential applicants for the “Enhancing resilience to wildfires in the wildland-urban interface” funding opportunity was held on Thursday, 9th July 2026. This webinar provided information on the funding opportunity and an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. This document provides the content of the webinar.

Webinar agenda

Items that will be covered in this webinar include:

1. welcome & introduction
2. programme wide overview
3. how the U.S. community can engage with this opportunity
4. how the Canada community can engage with this opportunity
5. how the UK community can engage with this opportunity
6. how to apply, assessment process and timeline
7. question and answer
8. next steps

Welcome & introduction

This webinar was hosted by the co-funders of this funding opportunity. These include:

- UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)
- U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Programme wide overview

This section was presented by Wendy Matcham (NERC-UKRI).

Background

In 2022, conversations commenced between the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC-UKRI) and NSF regarding resilience to wildfires.

In 2023, NERC commissioned a rotator group to review and report on current priorities and opportunities for wildfire research between the UK and the US. UKRI worked with NSF to scope a potential collaborative programme.

In 2025, Canada joined the partnership and the scope expanded. A joint call launched between UKRI, NSF and the Canada tri-agencies NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR.

Rationale

Wildfires are becoming more frequent, severe, and unpredictable, exposing gaps in how we understand, prepare for, and respond to these events. Fire researchers and practitioners refer with particular concern to fires at the 'wildland-urban interface' (WUI) where fire behaviour may change unpredictably. The WUI is identified as a key theme within priority research directions for wildfire science.

A joint call launched between UKRI, NSF and the Canada tri-agencies NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR, this call aligns to the UKRI Climate Adaptation, Environment and Resilience priority area.

Scope overview

This research programme will fund essential interdisciplinary research on the WUI to:

- catalyse new and existing collaborations and strengthen capacity amongst researchers across various jurisdictions in the UK, and the US, or Canada or both
- enhance resilience to wildfire risk in the WUI (for example, environmental, structural, health and community) at the local, regional and national scale

The programme will achieve this through the follow three aims:

- aim one: enhance knowledge and understanding of the risk and vulnerabilities of wildfire occurrence, intensity, behaviour and spread within the WUI under evolving and future fire regime scenarios
- aim two: investigate impacts (for example, environmental, social, cultural, human health, economic, or built environment) of wildfire occurrence in the WUI
- aim three: develop interventions and solutions for adaptation, mitigation, and recovery to wildfire in the WUI

Applications are required to demonstrate how they will advance knowledge and produce solutions focused outcomes against the programme aims. Applications must address at least two of the programmes aims listed above, of which one of these must be aim three.

Key points

The key points for potential applicants to note include:

- all projects must be collaborative
- projects must be one of the following collaboration configurations: UK-US-Canada, UK-US or UK-Canada
- each UK component can request up to £1,575,000; UKRI will fund 80% of this amount
- matched equivalent resources are anticipated from participating funders
- there is a mandatory Expression of Interest (EOI) stage
- projects must be 36 months in duration
- UKRI grants must start by 12th February 2027

- projects must be interdisciplinary, and on the UK side all applications must cover at least two UKRI-council remits
- one collaborative application should be submitted by the UK project lead to UKRI, detailing the UK and US, Canada, or both, contributions to the project

How the U.S. community can engage with this opportunity

This section was presented by Kendra McLauchlan (NSF).

NSF has internally coordinated wildland fire science through their Wildland Fire Initiative working group. Participating directorates include:

- Directorate for Biological Sciences
- Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering
- Directorate for Engineering
- Directorate for Geosciences
- Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences
- Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences
- Directorate for STEM Education
- Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships
- Office of International Science and Engineering

This trilateral Funding Opportunity aligns with NSF's FIRE program Wildland-Urban Interface focus area. For more information on NSF's FIRE program, please visit [Fire Science Innovations through Research and Education \(FIRE\) | NSF - U.S. National Science Foundation](#)

The contact email address for NSF is wildlandfire@nsf.gov

How the Canada community can engage with this opportunity

This section was presented by Kate Henbest (NSERC).

Funding

Funding available for the Canada component is as follows:

- NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR plan to invest \$3M each (total \$9M for Canadian research)
- each agency expects to fund approx. four projects
- projects may request budget from one, two or all three Canadian funders.
- The maximum request is \$250K per year, per funder, for 3 years
- 1 Canadian funder = \$750K max, 2 Canadian funders = \$1.5M max, 3 Canadian funders = \$2.25M max

Eligibility

Eligibility for the Canada component is as follows:

- one Canadian project lead should be identified in the UKRI submission as project co-lead (international). The Canadian project lead is the primary applicant for the NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR grants, and must be a Canadian university researcher eligible to receive NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR funds
- any co-applicants must also meet NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR eligibility requirements
- open to research in natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities and health disciplines

Canada component

One single PDF should be uploaded under the Canada component section. This should include budget documents, using specific NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR templates and attaching one per funder. Budget documents include:

- tab 1: proposed expenditures and budget justification
- tab 2: list NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR-supported research team and partner organizations (if any)

Applicants are to determine whether the grant application aims to advance a sensitive technology research area. If “yes”, they must also submit an attestation form for each researcher with a named role.

Applicants are to identify if the application includes at least one partner organization from the private sector who will be involved in the NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR-funded research activities. If “yes,” they must also complete and attach the Risk Assessment form.

For more information, please visit [Canadian funding opportunity webpage](#)

For questions on the Canadian aspects, please contact RP-Initiatives-PR@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

How the UK community can engage with this opportunity

This section was presented by Michelle Manning (NERC-UKRI).

UKRI eligibility

Standard UKRI eligibility applies for this funding opportunity, this includes:

- higher education providers
- independent research organisations
- public sector research establishments
- UKRI institutes
- Catapults

- NHS bodies

Non-standard eligibility does not apply for this funding opportunity, organisations therefore not eligible to apply for funding through this funding opportunity include:

- charities
- non-governmental organisations
- government departments
- third sector organisations
- social enterprises
- other educational establishments (for example, a college that does not usually undertake research activities)

For more information, please visit [Research organisations eligible for UKRI funding – UKRI](#)

UKRI remit

This is a cross-Council funding opportunity, all applications must cover at least two UKRI-council remits. These are:

- Natural Environment Research Council – for information on NERC remit, please visit [Remit, programmes and priorities – NERC – UKRI](#)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council - for information on EPSRC remit, please visit [EPSRC research portfolio and priorities – UKRI](#)
- Economic and Social Research Council - for information on ESRC remit, please visit [Remit, portfolio and priorities – ESRC – UKRI](#)
- Arts and Humanities Research Council - for information on AHRC remit, please visit [Remit, programmes and priorities – AHRC – UKRI](#)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council - for information on BBSRC remit, please visit [Remit, programmes and priorities – BBSRC – UKRI](#)
- Medical Research Council - for information on MRC remit, please visit [Remit, programmes and priorities – MRC – UKRI](#)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council - for information on STFC remit, please visit [Remit, portfolio and priorities – STFC – UKRI](#)

The UK component has a maximum funding per award of £1,575,000 at 100% Full Economic Cost (FEC), funded at 80% FEC.

Some indicative areas of interest, although please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- impacts of wildfires on the built environment
- developing interventions and solutions for adaptation, mitigation and recovery which might involve engineers or engineering solutions
- behavioural implications and impact of resilience strategies
- economic impact of solutions
- policy needs
- justice and inclusion
- intersections with cultural heritage (tangible and intangible)

- creative interventions and approaches
- co-creation and other participatory methodologies
- overlaps with place-based research
- understanding fire ecology and predictive tools
- how environmental change will affect fire regimes (extreme weather, land use change and management)
- fuel types and management
- fire breaks, fuel breaks and fire belts
- wildfire movement through urban areas
- transition from smouldering to flaming wildfire
- ecosystem health
- new wildfire data and testing of models
- water & air quality

How to apply, assessment process and timeline

This section was presented by Natasha Soutar (NERC-UKRI)

How to apply

Stage one: expression of interest (Eol)

You must have submitted an Eol before submitting your full application.

The Eol form will request information on project teams, project description, and remit areas included. Eols will not be assessed, the information will be used to inform plans for the assessment panel. They are also an opportunity to address any eligibility or remit concerns before full submission. Nothing provided as part of the Eol step is considered finalised, please complete the Eol to the best of your ability at the time.

We will not respond to all Eols. If you have not been contacted by 14th August 2026, please proceed to submit your full application.

The Eol deadline is 30th July 2026 (4 PM UK time).

Stage two: full application

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UKRI Funding Service so please ensure that your organisation is registered. Only the UK lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI, as such the UK 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.

The full application deadline is 1st October 2026 (4 PM UK time).

The links to complete an EoI and start your full application can be found on the funding opportunity webpage under how to apply. To visit this webpage, see [Enhancing resilience to wildfires in the wildland-urban interface – UKRI](#)

For queries, please contact wildfires@nerc.ukri.org

Assessment process

Applications will go to a panel of independent, international experts who will make a funding recommendation. Participating funders will make the final funding decision.

There will be no response stage for this funding opportunity, the proposed projects will be assessed purely on their application against the published assessment criteria.

The assessment areas are:

- vision
- approach
- applicant and team capability to deliver
- ethics and responsible research and innovation
- resources and cost justification (including US and Canada components)

For more information on how applications are assessed, please visit [How we make decisions – UKRI](#)

Timeline

The timeline for this Funding Opportunity is as follows:

- 2nd July 2026 - Funding Opportunity & EOI opens
- 9th July 2026 - webinar for potential applicants
- 30th July 2026 - EOI closes
- 1st October 2026 - Funding Opportunity closes (4pm UK time)
- November 2026 – assessment panel
- 12th February 2027 – projects start (no later than for UKRI grants)

Question and answer

Questions from webinar attendees were answered live. Answers to all questions are collated in the “Webinar question and answer document”.

Next steps

We will publish this webinar’s recording and slides on the funding opportunity webpage. We will compile answers to all questions submitted to us, including those we weren’t able to answer in this session, and circulate these via email to all registered attendees as well as publish these on the funding opportunity webpage. We will also circulate the names and biographies of all who consented to this at webinar registration for the purpose of facilitating connections.