

UKRI Translation: Impact Acceleration Accounts 2027 Webinar FAQ

We greatly appreciate the high level of community engagement, as reflected by the webinar attendance and questions submitted (before and during the webinar, and directly to councils). We have created the following FAQ document to address common themes emerging from submitted questions.

If you have further questions that are not covered below, or by the Funding Finder text, please contact the relevant Council(s):

- AHRC: iaas@ahrc.ukri.org
- EPSRC: acceleratingimpact@epsrc.ukri.org
- MRC: DPFSandDCS@mrc.ukri.org
- STFC: KEGroup@stfc.ac.uk

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.

What is the difference between IAAs at the institutional level and the project level?

An IAA is a strategic institutional account and Research Councils provide funds at an institutional level via awards to the research organisation (RO). Research Councils assess and fund the institutions' overall IAA strategy, governance, delivery plans and approach to supporting impact using the criteria set out in the application form.

This funding is flexible and enables ROs to support impact activities arising from their own research portfolios. Decisions on which specific projects are funded through the IAA are made by successful ROs using their own processes and funding mechanisms, in line with the aims and objectives of their IAA award.

Is there an indication of the expected number of IAA awards to be funded through open competitions?

We are unable to provide an indication of the number of awards expected to be funded through open competitions. Funding decisions will be based on the quality of applications received and the availability of budget, and therefore the number of awards made may vary.

Applicants are encouraged to focus on developing the strongest possible application, aligned with the aims and assessment criteria set out in the Funding Finder opportunity guidance.

Where a competitive process is being used, how much emphasis will be put on the size of the research portfolio or innovation pipeline at an applying institution, and will that affect the amount they should apply for?

Overall, applications will be assessed against the published assessment criteria. However, all applicants should demonstrate a strong research portfolio within the specific Research Council remit and any funding requests should be appropriate, and critical, for delivery the aims and objectives of your IAA activities.

Within your application, you should also demonstrate how IAA funding can add capabilities to existing opportunities, or areas of untapped potential that align with existing research strategies.

Who will sit on the expert review panels for the councils, and will these names be published?

The panel will consist of experts drawn from the academic and user base communities. Panel membership will be published after the panels have taken place.

Why is there no option to apply to BBSRC, ESRC or NERC in this IAA round?

BBSRC could not commit within the required timelines for this upcoming round. However, still recognise the importance of impact acceleration and remain engaged in future IAA development. BBSRC will continue to prioritise the translation of bioscience into impact through a broad portfolio of funding. We are investing strongly in translation and knowledge exchange through programmes, including the BBSRC Follow-On Fund, ICURe, Campus Innovation Awards, the BBSRC-STFC DeepTech Catalyst Bio (DTC Bio) and UKI2S.

NERC were also unable to commit to this funding round.

ESRC's IAA investments run until March 2028 and so colleagues are not currently able to advise about further investments.

How will councils assess applications for multiple IAAs; will there be any crossover?

As councils have separate budgets and will make separate awards, each research council will assess IAAs independently (i.e. own expert panel, independent from other submissions.)

If an organisation is applying to multiple councils, do you expect harmonisation across the institutional IAA applications? Will evidence of previous harmonisation be beneficial?

UKRI encourages research organisations to take advantage of the strategic opportunities afforded by alignment of IAA awards across disciplines. This may include opportunities to fund impact or translational activities across discipline boundaries, running parallel internal calls, expanding culture change or training activities, or sharing common impact and translational mechanisms.

UKRI recognises that opportunities for alignment may not always be obvious or accessible for all research organisations depending on discipline strengths or award outcomes (see 'Assessment Process'). Applications will not be disadvantaged if research organisations are not able to support multiple council IAAs. Application assessment will be undertaken at the council level in the first instance, but you may wish to consider how multiple IAAs would be managed, how they would align and how they would complement the organisation's overall strategy for impact and knowledge exchange. This is also something that should be seen as an ongoing objective throughout the lifetime of any successful awards.

However, you should also consider that each council is assessing applications individually and it may be viewed as a risk of delivery if council IAAs are intrinsically dependent on each other (where funding may not be guaranteed).

As a reminder, all relevant information should be included in each individual application, as only information contained within that application can be considered by the receiving council's assurance/assessment panel.

Should applicants demonstrate continuity from previous IAAs? And what does this mean for applicants that have not held previous IAAs?

Being awarded an IAA in the past is not an eligibility requirement for this funding opportunity. For institutions that have previously held an IAA, it may be helpful to reflect on any relevant learning, achievements or approaches that have informed the proposed programme. All applicants may wish to, consider whether you have any examples of previous impact funding (IAA or other) to provide reassurance on deliverability of impact activities.

The main focus should be on a plan for 2027-2030 IAA funding, that clearly addresses the assessment criteria and demonstrates how the proposed IAA will support and enable impact from research in a council's remit. The awards are intended to add value to existing funding and take advantage of new or unforeseen opportunities for creating impact. The plan and activities should be built around institution specific challenges and opportunities, developed through the lens of potential to deliver value i.e. appropriate to deliver vision and objectives, building on existing strengths and the outcomes of existing impact activity. IAAs are very flexible and offer the opportunity to try new approaches to address emerging opportunities and evolve through learning across the lifetime of the award.

Are you looking for applications to specialise and focus thematically according to their existing research and impact expertise? How important will it be to align with new UKRI Strategy and government priorities, e.g. the industrial strategy?

Responsibility for management of the IAAs is devolved to the research organisation, to design and deliver activities that best suit their institutional strategies and opportunities, whilst addressing the UKRI IAA aims and objectives. These opportunities may be translating the outputs of curiosity-driven research across the breadth of relevant council remits, with no specific direction from councils on particular priorities to be addressed through this funding opportunity. We would expect appropriate governance and management structures to review plans and priorities over the lifetime of the award, recognising that areas of unique opportunity and untapped potential may evolve as other funding opportunities emerge e.g. UKRI activities focussed on Strategic government and societal priorities. Applications will be assessed against the published assessment criteria, including 'Use of existing resources, strengths and relationships', and so it is expected that an IAA Approach is designed in institution specific context and embedded within a wider funding ecosystem.

Can you clarify expectations around key roles on the application, specifically PL, PcL and Project Manager, and appropriate associated costs?

The project lead (PL) should be an academic or strategic lead for the IAA application, who has senior oversight and responsibility for the relevant council discipline or portfolio.

The project co-lead (PcL) should be the same person for all the research organisation's IAAs and should be able to provide strategic oversight, governance and management at the level of the research organisation, to ensure alignment and added value from any awarded IAAs, where appropriate.

If a research organisation is applying to only one research council IAA, the PcL should still provide strategic oversight and act as the primary institutional contact for the award, but the cross-council coordination aspects of the role would not apply.

The grant manager should be the person responsible for delivering the IAA on a day-to-day basis. They will manage and administer the IAA.

We do not expect the PL and CoL to be costed. Grant manager time is not a fixed percentage - they can be costed as required but will need to be fully justified.

Considering that these are devolved funding accounts where project awards will be made after the grants are issued, what level of detail is expected in the Justification of Resources?

We expect institutions to outline planned resources required to deliver the vision and approach, providing indicative funding allocations against the planned activities. We recognise that this will largely be at the mechanism level and that some flexibility will be required to accommodate opportunities that arise across the lifetime of the IAA. We expect IAA delivery staff, to enable IAA funding management and coordination to be clearly justified.

What types of activity can be supported by IAAs, and how important is a range of activities?

IAAs are intended to support a range of wide range of impact activities and can be used both to build on existing strengths and to explore new opportunities.

Applicants should clearly articulate the rationale for their proposed approach and the benefits it will deliver. The specific activities undertaken within the budgetary envelope proposed would be dependent on the aims and objectives of the IAA proposal, the institutional strategy and broader ecosystem and value added through IAA support. You should consider how you will use a range of flexible and adaptive approaches to take advantage of all opportunities for driving impact.

What travel and subsistence (T&S) costs will be supported by IAAs? Will they support visits to collaborators or running conferences or events, for example?

The majority of IAA funding should be allocated to driving impact from IAA-funded projects. Impact project costs may include travel and subsistence for forging strategic partnerships, but these should be clearly linked to delivery of the impact project.

Do you expect Project Partners to be identified and support an application for an IAA?

No, there is no expectation for Project Partners to be identified and/or provide support to the IAA application at the institutional level. However, we recognise that you may have already identified third party project partners whose partnership is aligned with the overarching aims and objectives of your IAA proposal. Any direct and in-kind contributions from these project partners should be clearly articulated, as well as the added value of partnership.

We encourage institutions to support mechanisms and deploy funding that strengthens engagement with users and non-academic partners, and recognise that at the project level, specific partners may be identified over the lifetime of the award through internal processes, funding calls and for specific projects.

A project partner is a collaborating organisation that will have an integral role in the proposed research and provides contributions to the delivery of the project. Project partners should not normally seek to claim funds from the grant. However, exceptions include:

- where a project partner is providing services or equipment (subcontractor acting in a dual role). Subcontracted work will be subject to the procurement rules of the host research organisation.
- the project partner can receive small amounts of funding from the grant, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings relevant to the translational aims and objectives of the impact project. These will need to be requested by the principal investigator of the project and will need to be fully justified.

Can the projects supported by a research organisation's IAA funding include international elements?

The primary purpose of IAA funding is to accelerate the impact of UK research and support the translation and progression of ideas that originate from, and are led by, the award-holding research organisation along the impact pipeline.

Overall, we expect IAAs to deliver clear benefit to the UK. At the project level, projects with international elements (engagement and/or impact) are eligible for IAA funding where justified and directly contributing to the aims of the project. There should also be a strong route to impact, with connection back to UK benefit. For example, we would expect international activity in this context to:

- enhance translation and commercialisation
- strengthen UK capability or reputation

When delivering and managing activities, IAAs are also expected to adhere to:

- [UKRI Trusted Research and Innovation: principles and expectations](#)
- [UKRI expectations for intellectual property management and use](#)
- UKRI principles for [ethical](#) and [responsible research and innovation](#)

For MRC consortia, what types of institutions are allowed in the consortia bid, and how will consortia be assessed alongside single-RO applications?

Institutions must be eligible for UKRI funding. All applications will be assessed in line with the assessment criteria outlined in the Funding Finder. For consortia, or group, applications – the added value of the partnership should be clearly articulated and why this is critical to achieving the aims / objectives outlined in your proposal. You should clearly identify the opportunities for impact and why this specific grouping is required. You should also clearly articulate how the IAA will be governed and managed across multiple institutions.

Besides MRC, do other councils allow joint applications from more than one RO?

No, applications to AHRC, EPSRC and STFC should be from a single research organisation.

Will AHRC continue to use a cluster model as part of its IAA investment management approach for successful applications?

Feedback on the current cluster model has been largely positive, particularly in supporting collaboration, peer learning and the sharing of good practice. While no decisions have been made on future arrangements, we are considering lessons learned from the current cohort to help inform future programme design.

Are there specific KPIs to be addressed in the application and are you expecting target numbers as well? How does this fit with UKRI monitoring expectations?

As part of the assessment criteria of 'outputs, outcomes and measures of success' you will need to address how you will "clearly and credibly measure the success and added value of your IAAs, including qualitative and quantitative monitoring of outputs, outcomes and impacts, including those of partners, users or both". Include detail of the qualitative and quantitative indicators [KPIs] that will be used to monitor the progress and success of planned activities against the objectives. Where appropriate, any targets or trajectories should be defined to supporting strategic evolution and decision making over the lifetime of an award. KPIs and targets should be appropriate and proportionate to the scale of award and activities.

Should we incorporate Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I), ethics and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), and environmental sustainability considerations into every project decision?

Yes, all projects funded through IAAs should incorporate ED&I, ethics, RRI and environmental sustainability throughout project design and delivery, where relevant and proportionate to the proposed activities.

These aspects should be taken into consideration and inform decision-making to help ensure that projects are inclusive, responsible and deliver positive outcomes.