

EPSRC-Defra Reimagining Circularity: Outline Stage Funding Opportunity Informational Webinar

Webinar Date/Time: 17 September 2026, 14:00 UK Time

Webinar Recording: <https://youtu.be/jWHRfFFcoAk>

Funding Opportunity Webpage: <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/epsrc-defra-reimagining-circularity-full-stage/>

Applications

1. What does "your team may choose to combine mean"? It was stated in the email received. I had interpreted this as two consortium may combine: "The details of successful applicants at stage one will be published to facilitate engagement with potential additional partners. Your teams might choose to combine or add partners or find new partners, this could be based on panel feedback. It will be at your discretion whether to include additional partners in your application."
2. If two consortia merge, would it disadvantage an independent consortium, going forward?

We have now updated this wording on the UKRI Funding Finder as there was an error. Please see a clarification and updated wording below.

The details of successful applicants at stage one will be published to facilitate engagement with potential additional partners. Your team might choose to add partners or find new partners. This could be based on outline stage panel feedback. It will be at your discretion whether to include additional partners in your application. Two individual teams who were successful to the full stage are not able to combine to form one new team.

Please note that your Full Stage Application must align closely to your Outline Stage application. EPSRC will check all full applications to ensure that they are majority EPSRC remit, are consistent with what was submitted in the outline application and still fit the remit of funding opportunity overall. We reserve the right to reject applications that do not fulfil these requirements.

3. When will you publish the list of the projects through to the full stage?

We will endeavour to publish the summaries by Friday September 25th 2026. Outline Stage outcomes are published on the [EPSRC Funding Application Outcomes Tableau](#).

Assessment

4. Which project team members, other than the PL, will the funder expect to see at the interview?

Up to four applicants per project team will be permitted to attend the interview. There is no correct configuration of project team members in attendance at your interview. Your group should be made of individuals who it is felt are the group most suited to attend.

Project Partners

5. Sorry, just to be clear, am I right to understand that project partners are *not* eligible to receive funding via the flexible fund?
6. I understand that Cols are not eligible for flexible funds. If an external partner writes a letter of support for the network, are they eligible to be part of a flex fund project?

7. So partners (with letters of support) can be partners on the flexible funding, but not get funded?
Am I understanding this correctly?

Project Partners included on the Network Plus can be included as project partners or subcontractors on applications for flexible funding, if it is led by an eligible organisation. However the NetworkPlus project lead (who is ultimately responsible to ensure ongoing governance to ensure correct usage and accountability of the funds) and anyone involved in the fund management and assessment process would need to consider how to manage that kind of conflict in the assessment process they run for flexible fund projects.

Individuals formally involved in the NetworkPlus (project lead, project co-leads, project partners etc.) cannot apply for the flexible fund directly, and named project partners cannot receive the flexible funding.

8. Can industry project partners be subcontractors?

Industry project partners can be subcontractors in a flexible fund funded project led by a higher education institution. The project has to be led by a research organisation eligible for UKRI funding, but the team can subcontract if it is fully justified. The research organisation receiving the project funding needs to undertake a procurement process in addition.

Scope of Call

9. I'd be interested to understand a little more about the decision not to proceed with the Built Environment-focused Network. Was that mainly due to the quality of the proposals received, or does it reflect a change in strategic focus or priorities?

Recently, UKRI has taken a significantly different approach to the Spending Review allocations process, including the introduction of pan-UKRI priority programmes to address government and societal priorities. This is a significant change for the way UKRI has worked over recent years. Due to this, EPSRC are unable to co-fund this funding opportunity. It will now be a Defra-only funded programme.