Funding opportunity

Pre-announcement: UKRI Translation: Proof of Concept

Opportunity status:	Upcoming
Funders:	UK Research and Innovation, **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**, **Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**, **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**, **Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)**, **Medical Research Council (MRC)**, **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)**, **Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)**
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£9,000,000
Award range:	£100,000 - £250,000
Publication date:	18 February 2026
Opening date:	4 March 2026 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	13 May 2026 4:00pm UK time

Apply for funding for research commercialisation activities to develop new products, processes, and services via future venture creation, licensing or other commercialisation routes.

Applications are welcomed from any discipline. The programme will not fund discovery or curiosity-driven research.

You must be based in a UK research organisation eligible for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding.

The full economic cost (FEC) can be up to £250,000 up to nine months duration.
UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC. We aim to support a range of projects across both the cost, length and remit permitted.

> ⓘ This is a pre-announcement and the information may change.
> The funding opportunity will open on 4 March 2026. More information will be available on this page then.

Who can apply

This opportunity is open to organisations with standard eligibility. **Check if your organisation is eligible.**

To ensure applications are assessed in a timely manner and to maintain a reasonable success rate, we are implementing demand management measures to this funding opportunity. Research organisations will each be allocated a cap for the maximum number of applications allowed to be submitted as project lead. This is detailed in the annex under additional information.

Submission of the grant application is managed by your institution's research office (or equivalent).

We are encouraging eligible research organisations and potential applicants to work together to agree which applications are submitted to this funding opportunity as project leads, up to the maximum number allowed for that organisation.

Who is eligible to apply

Those eligible to apply include:

- researchers including post-doctoral researchers, research assistants or associates, head of groups, fellows
- support staff including, technicians, specialists, research and innovation associates including technology transfer or knowledge exchange staff (when employed directly by the eligible organisation)

Who is not eligible to apply

Those not eligible to apply include:

- employees at public sector research establishments, public sector arm length bodies and government departments applying to develop their own public sector knowledge assets
- anyone eligible to apply to the Government Office for Technology Transfer's **funding to accelerate your Knowledge Assets towards the market (GOV.UK)**
- employees in business, sole trader, industry bodies
- doctoral students are not eligible to apply as lead during the duration of their course

International applicants

International applicants based outside the UK are not eligible to apply.

Resubmission

Resubmission of previously unsuccessful applications are not permitted unless you have been explicitly invited to do so. This includes unsuccessful applications previously submitted to another research council or UKRI Proof of Concept opportunity.

If an application has progressed and evolved significantly since it was last submitted, notably around its commercial proposition and technical development, it would be considered a different proposal and can be submitted to this funding opportunity.

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

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

To accommodate a range of background, expertise, personal circumstances and commercialisation journeys, the UKRI Proof of Concept programme should be considered flexibly so that it can attract the best talent.

What we're looking for

Aim

The UKRI Proof of Concept funding opportunity aims to support and accelerate the development of new or improved technologies, products, processes, and services arising from research activities at eligible UK research organisations.

Scope

The UKRI Proof of Concept funding opportunity supports early-to-mid stage commercialisation activities that validate concepts that arose from research, at the pre-licensing or pre-company creation stage (spinouts or social ventures) or any other commercialisation routes. This is to support and enable the commercial application of existing research along varied commercialisation pathways.

Applications are welcomed from across all research disciplines and research councils' remit (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC and STFC) including cross and multi-disciplinary approaches.

We will support projects that are not eligible for funding applications via existing UKRI funding opportunities or those projects that have been funded by other mechanisms and that now require further de-risking at a larger scale.
If your project is eligible and in scope for live or upcoming UKRI council specific translation, knowledge exchange or commercialisation support via a specific council funding opportunity, you should apply to that council.

This UKRI funding opportunity aims to de-risk the commercialisation of research. This will allow research organisations and their partners to deliver better commercialisation outcomes. These outcomes may include establishing successful university spinouts or social ventures, as well as developing other applicable commercialisation routes that generate societal and economic benefits for the UK

The intended outputs of funded projects should include the development of an appropriate commercialisation proposition and strategy. This might include increasing readiness towards an investable or licensable proposition (or any other applicable commercialisation routes, for example social ventures) after completion of the proof-of-concept project.

Successful applicants and their institutions will need to demonstrate commitment to the adoption of best practices in research commercialisation (including, for example, TenU USIT guides).

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

Duration

The duration of this award is a minimum of six months and a maximum of nine months from project start date.

Projects must start by 1 October 2026.

Funding available

The FEC of your project can be up to £250,000 with a minimum amount of £100,000.

UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC.

UKRI aims to fund a range of applications across both the cost and duration permitted.

Resources to access specialised expertise pertinent to your specific commercialisation journey are an eligible cost but will be assessed as part of the resource justifications in your application. These may include expertise such as further intellectual property strategy development, legal requirement, expert business advice and investor input, user-centric design, regulatory requirements or standards.

Collaborations between organisations across the research and development system and notably access to specialised facilities or infrastructures are welcome, including with those facilities supported by UKRI (Catapults, Research Institutes, Campuses and Clusters, Facilities and Centres) but not exclusively.

What we will fund

The UKRI Proof of Concept opportunity supports two types of activities as part of the same grant award. These are the further development or advancement of research toward specific user needs or market use or audiences, as well as the development of the commercialisation requirements needed to reach those users or markets. Both types of activities need to be addressed if you are to be successful in your research commercialisation endeavour.

Example of activities supported as part of Proof of Concept include:

- advancement of existing research outputs toward real world applications
- development of prototypes
- product, process or service design
- user testing and feedback
- refining routes to markets, users or audiences
- development of the business model including future financial sustainability

- development of product, process or service value chains including scale up requirements
- development of understanding of market, user or audience segmentation and positioning
- development of intellectual property strategy
- establishing or demonstrating freedom to operate
- developing regulatory or standards requirement needed to reach user/audience
- confirmation of market validation and product or market fit
- establishment of and test value proposition with target market or audience
- validation studies including larger scale viability studies
- prototype demonstration
- 'technical' and real-world concept optimisation

These are only examples of activities that form part of Proof-of-Concept development. Your activities should be specific to your project, your target market, user or audience needs and disciplines. You are encouraged to use milestones, both technical and commercial, to demonstrate the progression of your project toward its intended market, user or audience.

What we will not fund

The Proof of Concept opportunity is not a standard research project. This opportunity will not fund:

- fundamental or curiosity-driven research
- discovery research
- the simple extension or continuity of on-going work between research grants
- public engagement activities
- the filing of intellectual property, for example, patent, trademark or registered design

Supporting skills and talent

Taking research outputs toward real world commercialisation outcomes requires a diversity of skills, expertise, experiences and talents. We encourage you to consider the full range of expertise, experience and talent required as part of your wider team in order to succeed. Project leads do not need to be primary investigators or the most senior researcher. We welcome all level of experience and expertise to apply as part of the eligible research organisation.

We encourage you to follow the principles of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** and the **Technician Commitment**.

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. 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 applicants can find additional support.

How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UKRI Funding Service so please ensure that your organisation is registered. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system. We will publish full details on how to apply when the funding opportunity opens.

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** Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
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.

Please be aware that research office and finance teams undertake checks on hosting arrangements and financial eligibility. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with all opportunity requirements lies with the applicant.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. We recommend embedding your project plan or Gannt chart as images in the relevant sections of your application.

When including images, you must:

- provide a descriptive caption or legend for each image immediately underneath it in the text box (this must be outside the image and counts towards your word limit)
- insert each new image on a new line
- use files smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Images should only be used to convey important visual information that cannot easily be put into words. The following are not permitted, and your application may be rejected if you include:

- sentences or paragraphs of text
- tables
- excessive quantities of images

A few words are permitted where the image would lack clarity without the contextual words, such as a diagram, where text labels are required for an axis or graph column.

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](#)**

References

References should be included within the word count of the appropriate question section. You should use your discretion when including references and

prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

Hyperlinks can be used in reference information. When including references, you should consider how your references will be viewed and used by the assessors, ensuring that:

- references are easily identifiable by the assessors
- references are formatted as appropriate to your research
- persistent identifiers are used where possible

General use of hyperlinks

Applications should be self-contained. You should only use hyperlinks to link directly to reference information. You must not include links to web resources to extend your application. Assessors are not required to access links to conduct assessment or recommend a funding decision.

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

UKRI must receive your application by 13 May 2026 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 this funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and submitted applications will not be amended. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

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.

Sensitive information

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

Include in the subject line: [UKRI Proof of Concept; 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.**

Institutional Matched Funding

There is no requirement for matched funding from the institutions hosting the project lead, project co-leads or other staff employed on the application, beyond the standard 20% FEC. Expert reviewers and panels assessing UKRI funding applications must not consider levels of institutional matched funding as a factor on which to base recommendations. Direct and in-kind contributions from third party project partners are encouraged.

This policy does not remove the need for support from host organisations who must provide the necessary research environment and infrastructure for award-specific activities funded by UKRI. For example, research facilities, training and development of staff.

Publication of outcomes

If your 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 usually make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, therefore do not include any confidential or sensitive information. 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:

- the user needs and market opportunity your project addresses
- the aims and objectives and how you are addressing this challenge
- the proposed route to application(s) and markets
- the benefit(s) to potential users or customers

Core team

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

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

Only list one individual as project lead.

UKRI has introduced a new addition to the 'Specialist' role type. Public contributors such as people with lived experience can now be added to an application.

Find out more about **UKRI's core team roles in funding applications**.

Application questions

Classification of your proposed project

Word limit: 100

Which areas of research and commercialisation pathway does your proposed work include?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Classification areas may include research areas, and appropriate commercial proposition.

To help UKRI identify panel members to assess your application, please enter a minimum of two and no more than four keywords from the list provided in additional information, separated by semi-colons.

Please ensure that you use the precise codes and wording of the research areas as provided in the list (we suggest you use the copy and paste functions).

You are permitted one free text keyword or phrase, reserved only for where your proposed commercialisation pathway is not represented by the keywords provided. Please use the code 'FREE' as a pre-fix if you include a free text keyword.

Please put this keyword or phrase at the end of your list.

Opportunity and market analysis

Word limit: 2,000

What is the opportunity you are looking to exploit or what challenge will your project address?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your proposed work:

- has the potential to address a business need, technological challenge, or exploit a market opportunity
- could lead to the development or deployment of a new or improved product, service, or technology
- is timely given current trends and context
- meets the needs of potential users or customers
- is resilient to changing external circumstances and consumer behaviours
- impacts positively on society, the economy or the environment

Within this section we also expect you to:

- identify the potential direct or indirect benefits and who the beneficiaries might be

Route to market

Word limit: 1,200

How would your proposed project progress the innovation towards its intended user(s) or market(s)?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you have designed your approach so that it:

- includes plans for the innovation to reach its intended market or users
- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives
- is feasible and is supported by technical, research or scientific evidence
- comprehensively identifies any risks to delivery and how they will be managed
- if applicable, summarises the previous work and describes how this will be built upon and progressed
- will maximise translation of outputs into outcomes and impacts
- identifies any support required post-award to deliver the solution such as access to other networks or further funding

Within the Route to market section we also expect you to:

- demonstrate access to the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment to deliver the proposal
- provide a detailed and comprehensive project plan, including milestones and timelines in the form of a Gantt chart or similar (additional one-page A4)
- describe how the proposed work will inform or deploy the product, service or technology using the most appropriate route to market

Intellectual property (IP) management and communication

Word limit: 1,200

What is your IP exploitation plan?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of your plans to:

- manage the outputs of the project, including any intellectual assets and intellectual property and its protection (if applicable)
- have freedom to operate
- protect the foreground IP or market position
- disseminate and communicate the outputs of your project in a timely manner without compromising future IP protection
- access potential future investments, if required

Applicant and team capability to deliver

Word limit: 1,650

Why are you the right individual or team to successfully deliver the proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:

- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work
- the right balance of skills and expertise to cover the proposed work
- the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to develop others
- contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community
- describes how your, and if applicable your team's, innovation environment (in terms of the place, its location, reputation, and relevance to the project) will contribute to the success of the work

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

The word limit for this section is 1,650 words: 1,150 words to be used for Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) modules and, if necessary, a further 500 words for Additions.

Use the R4RI format to showcase the range of relevant skills you and, if relevant, your team (project and project co-leads, researchers, technicians, specialists, partners and so on) have and how this will help deliver the proposed work. You can include individuals' specific achievements but only choose past contributions that best evidence their ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the R4RI module headings listed. Use each heading once and include a response for the whole team, see the **UKRI guidance on R4RI**. You should consider how to balance your answer, and emphasise where appropriate the key skills each team member brings:

- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge
- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit

Additions

Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section is optional and can be up to 500 words. You should not use it to describe additional skills, experiences, or outputs, but you can use it to describe any factors that provide context for the rest of your R4RI (for example, details of career breaks if you wish to disclose them).

Complete this as a narrative. Do not format it like a CV.

References may be included within this section.

UKRI research councils will no longer accept dual roles in applications. This means that an organisation which appears on the application as a project partner, should not also be a subcontractor for the project. This is to ensure that research organisations can agree access to award outputs and intellectual property rights between the relevant parties, in line with subsidy control regulations.

In specific instances, UKRI will continue to allow some project partners to request minor funding on an award, for example for travel and subsistence.

The roles in funding applications policy has descriptions of the different project roles.

Resources and cost justification

Word limit: 2,000

What will you need to deliver your proposed work and how much will it cost?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Justify the application's more costly resources, in particular:

- project staff
- significant travel for field work or collaboration (but not regular travel between collaborating organisations or to conferences)
- any equipment that will cost more than £25,000
- any consumables beyond typical requirements, or that are required in exceptional quantities
- all facilities and infrastructure costs
- all resources that have been costed as 'Exceptions'

You can request costs associated with reasonable adjustments where they increase as a direct result of working on the project. For further information see **disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders**.

Assessors are not looking for detailed costs or a line-by-line breakdown of all project resources. Overall, they want you to demonstrate how the resources you anticipate needing for your proposed work:

- are comprehensive, appropriate, and justified
- represent the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes
- maximise potential outcomes and impacts

Ethics and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)

Word limit: 500

What are the ethical and RRI considerations, implications and issues relating to the proposed work? If you do not think that the proposed work raises any ethical or RRI issues, explain why.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate that you have identified and evaluated:

- the relevant ethical and RRI considerations, including both the research or topic area itself and the design and delivery of the project
- the wider implications of the proposed work, and how you will maximise the positive societal, environmental, and economic benefits arising from the project, whilst minimising unintended negative impacts, such as research misuse or accidental harm
- how you will manage these considerations throughout the lifecycle of the project and how any potential negative impacts are mitigated

If you are collecting or using data you should identify:

- any legal and ethical considerations of collecting, releasing or storing the data (including consent, confidentiality, anonymisation, security and other ethical considerations and, in particular, strategies to not preclude further reuse of data)
- formal information standards that your proposed work will comply with

Additional sub-questions (to be answered only if appropriate) relating to research involving:

- animals
- human participants
- genetically modified organisms

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Please refer to the **UKRI position statement on funding ethical research** and **responsible innovation** for more information around our expectations on ethical and responsible research and innovation.

Your organisation's support

Word limit: 500

Provide details of support from your research organisation. Organisational support for your proposed application will be a key aspect considered as part of the assessment, and this should include a technology transfer office if your organisation has one. We recognise that in some instances, this support may be provided by the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) or equivalent, the Research Office, or a combination of both.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide a statement of support from your research organisation detailing how they will support you, as the applicant, and your proposed commercialisation activities. This should include details of any additional support that might add value to the work.

Assessors will be looking for a strong statement of support from your research organisation. This information should have been approved for submission by an appropriate institutional authority.

You must also include the following details:

- a significant person's name, their position and office or department, or all
- office address or web link

Upload details are provided within the Funding Service on the actual application.

Project partners

Add details about any project partners' contributions. If there are no project partners, you can indicate this on the Funding Service.

A project partner is a collaborating organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include direct contributions for example cash, donated equipment and resources, or staff seconded to the project, or indirect and in-kind contributions for example use of project partner's equipment, datasets, or facilities. Project partners may be in industry, academia, third sector or government organisations in the UK or overseas, including partners based in the EU.

Add the following project partner details:

- the organisation name and address (searchable via a drop-down list or enter the organisation's details manually, as applicable)
- the project partner contact name and email address
- the type of contribution (direct or indirect) and its monetary value

If a detail is entered incorrectly and you have saved the entry, remove the specific project partner record and re-add it with the correct information.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made.

Data management and sharing

Word limit: 500

How will you manage and share data collected or acquired through the proposed research?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide a data management plan that clearly details how you will comply with UKRI's published **data sharing policy**, which includes detailed guidance notes.

Facilities

Word limit: 1,000

Does your proposed research require the support and use of a facility?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

If you will need to use a facility, follow your proposed facility's normal access request procedures. Ensure you have prior agreement so that if you are offered funding, they will support the use of their facility on your project.

For each requested facility you will need to provide the:

- name of facility, copied and pasted from the **facility information list (DOCX, 42KB)**
- proposed usage or costs, or costs per unit where indicated on the facility information list
- confirmation you have their agreement where required

Facilities should only be named if they are on the facility information list above. If you will not need to use a facility, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

Word limit: 100

Does your proposed work relate to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation principles?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate how your proposed work relates to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation principles including:

- list any dual-use (both military and non-military) applications to your research
- if this project is relevant to one or more of the **17 areas of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act**, please list the area(s)
- please read the **academic export control guidance** and confirm if an export control licence is required for this project and the status of any application(s)

- if your project involves any items or substances on the UK strategic export control list, please provide a list

We may ask you to provide additional TR&I information later, in line with UKRI TR&I principles and funding terms and conditions (RGC 2.6.2, 2.7.1 and 2.7.2).

International collaboration

Word limit: 100

Does the proposed work involve any international collaboration or engagement? If so, what are the benefits to the project?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide details about your expected international collaboration or engagement, including:

- a list of the countries your international project partners, visiting researchers, or other collaborators are based in
- details of any subcontractors or service providers
- justification that the international resource or expertise does not exist in the UK

If your proposed work does not involve international collaboration or engagement, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

Panel expert review

We will convene a panel of experts and peers to review your application independently, against the specified criteria for this funding opportunity.

You will not be able to nominate reviewers for applications on the new UKRI Funding Service. Research councils will continue to select expert panel members.

Following UKRI office eligibility and remit checks, your eligible application will be sent to expert panels for review. Each application will be assessed by at least two panel members. We will invite experts to use the evidence provided in your application to assess both the advancement of research toward your

specific goals as well as the development of the commercialisation requirements needs.

Each panel member will assign a score to your application based on its quality and rank it alongside other applications prior to discussion after which the panel(s) will make a funding recommendation to UKRI.

For more information on how we prioritise applications for funding please visit **how we make decisions**.

Portfolio management measures

UKRI receives more high-quality applications than we are able to support. In making our final funding decisions we will consider portfolio balance. Factors that could contribute to portfolio balance include:

- geographic distribution
- host organisation type and support available
- specific discipline areas

Unless there is a specifically identified strategic need, or targeted additional funding, guiding principles for portfolio balancing are that funding decisions should broadly be in proportion to applications, unless disproportionately low levels of applications are received.

The Funding Service collects personal data including on ethnicity, sex and gender and disability. We will use the personal data you give us to inform analysis and investigate if applicants to the scheme who share a protected characteristic:

- suffer a disadvantage linked to that characteristic
- have different needs to other groups, or
- have a disproportionately low level of participation

If this results in an evidenced need then UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions. This is in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

UKRI will make the final funding decision following the deliberation from all expert panels review and you will receive the outcomes of the assessment from UKRI.

Timescale

We aim to complete the assessment process within three months of receiving your application.

Feedback

If your application was discussed by a panel, we will give generic feedback with the outcome of your application.

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 expert review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment, including to correct language, spelling, grammar and formatting. 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**.

Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:

- opportunity and market analysis
- route to market
- intellectual property (IP) management and communication
- applicant and team capability to deliver
- resources and cost justification
- ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

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

Contact details

Get help with your application

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

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 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, 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 application 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 **poc@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 more efficiently, 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.

For further information on submitting an application read **how applicants use the Funding Service**.

Additional info

Background

Grant funding provided by the UKRI Proof-of-Concept (POC) opportunity does not constitute legal subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Standard UKRI terms and conditions of research grants apply to the POC opportunity, notably with regards to the publication and dissemination of research outputs.

Knowledge assets including intellectual property and any rights arising from projects funded by the POC opportunity (foreground intellectual property and their rights including patents) need to be managed professionally and according to current practices.

Successful applicants may need to demonstrate the adoption of good practices (TenU USIT guides or other relevant practices).

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.

Supporting documents

List of Standardised keywords, PDF (100KB)
Application caps for Research Organisations, PDF (279KB)

List of standardised keywords

Applicants are asked to enter a minimum of two and no more than four keywords from the list provided, into the classification of the project question.

Please ensure that you use the precise codes and wording of the research areas as provided in the list (we suggest you use the copy and paste functions).

Demand management: institutional caps for research organisations

Research organisations are each allocated a cap for the maximum number of full applications allowed to be submitted as project lead. This allocation has been calculated based on submissions to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), and specifically the full-time equivalent staff numbers included within each organisation's REF submission. The specific caps have been defined in the document attached.

Webinar for potential applicants

We will hold a webinar on:

- 18 March 2026 2:00pm to 3:00pm UK time
- 25 March 2026 10:00am to 11:00am UK time
- 14 April 2026 3:00pm to 4:00pm UK time

This will provide more information about the funding opportunity and a chance to ask questions.

Registration details to follow once the POC funding opportunity opens.

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.

Timeline

○ **18 February 2026 9:00am**
Pre-announcement

○ **4 March 2026 9:00am**
Opening date

○ **18 March 2026 2:00pm**
Webinar

○ **25 March 2026 10:00am**
Webinar

○ **14 April 2026 3:00pm**
Webinar

○ **13 May 2026 4:00pm**
Closing date

○ **June 2026**
Assessment period

○ **July 2026**
Decisions communicated

○ **1 October 2026**
Project start date

Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ukri-translation-proof-of-concept