

ISCF 'Faraday Challenge' – Batteries for Britain FAQs Document

How will proposals be assessed for this call?

Proposals will first be assessed by post peer review where reviewers will be able to comment on the proposal but will be asked specifically to assess the scientific track record and quality of the bidding institutions. Applicants will then be provided with an opportunity to submit a response to the comments received prior to proposals being assessed at a subsequent Interview stage.

After the Institute has been formed, what role will EPSRC take in the administration of further funding for the institute?

EPSRC will co-ordinate the assessment process for the Institute and Director call, alongside an initial call for four 'Fast Start' capability projects. Following the completion of these calls, EPSRC will retain some of the funding from the ISCF fund to support additional activities to ensure the breadth and scope of the Institute are achieved. EPSRC will also operate in a monitoring and assistance role for the Institute and aim to facilitate the funding process for subsequent waves of Institute research programmes.

What will be the process for assessing project process and re-assigning funding on projects?

As stated in the call document the Institute will reserve the right to curtail funding in areas which are not meeting expectations/objectives and to re-direct this funding to a more successful work stream. Each work stream will be subject to active monitoring and evaluation throughout its lifetime and assessment will be the responsibility of the Institute, Director and through advice from the technical advisory board and the ISCF Challenge Director for the Faraday Challenge.

What are the expectations for the research Institute to pursue collaborations both nationally and internationally?

As with all EPSRC investments we aim to broaden collaborations between the best. This means that the Institute should seek to build relationships and partnerships with the expertise it requires in order to ensure the UK is and remains world leading in the development of novel battery technologies. Funding can only pay for the UK research activity.

What are the expectations of EPSRC in regards to the recruitment of staff to the Institute?

EPSRC expects that as part of fulfilling their commitment to the institute the funded consortia of Universities will be expected to recruit staff who have/or have the potential to develop world leading research expertise in this field and who will make a significant contribution to the progress of the institution in this field.

What are the boundaries of expertise expected to be involved in the Institute and research programme?

From the business case approved by BEIS it was clear that for the UK to be a success in this research field a broad range of expertise is expected to be involved in this research programme. This extends from expertise in chemistry, engineering, physics, modelling, ICT and beyond. In order to make this institute a success the Institute must also

consider the other components of successful battery systems including the battery management system, power electronics, grid integration required etc.

How much of the funding will be committed to new capital investment?

Through the scoping work completed previously and the scientific case approved by BEIS, it is clear that a significant level of capital investment has been made available in this research field previously and only a small amount of extra capital funding is required. Therefore, it will be increasingly important that those involved in the research Institute agree to providing access to the necessary facilities available both to academic and industrial partners.

What do Government and the Research Funders see as the key measures of success of this programme?

Once the Institute is set up and the first phase of this programme is underway, EPSRC, IUK and the APC will work with their investments to outline key performance indicators which each investment will be measured against. Ultimately the key aim is for the UK to be a world leader in battery technologies through having world leading research and industrial capabilities. In the short term the main aim is to demonstrate the success of this programme to seek further funding.

Will Industrial support be required for applications from University consortia to form the Institute?

EPSRC would expect that each University partner is already actively engaged with a number of industrial partners in this field and as such could expect their partners to indicate their support of their application. Industrial support, whilst expected, could be either a cash or in kind contribution.

Who will the Institute be required to seek advice from? What is the overall governance structure for this project?

A technical advisory board has been formed which contains technical and business expertise of batteries research and which spans the automotive sector and beyond. This technical advisory board will oversee both the EPSRC and Innovate UK investments and provide recommendations on the scientific direction of the Institute. Further to this there will be an academic advisory board in place to ensure value for money of any investments specifically made by the Faraday Challenge Research Institute. An ISCF Challenge Director who oversees each strand of the Faraday Challenge programme (i.e. EPSRC, IUK and APC) will help steer each programme strand and will feed into an overall advisory board structure in place to consider the progress of all ISCF Challenges.

As the Institute will be expected to create a world-leading training programme, does this mean EPSRC will not be running other CDTs in general and more specifically in this area?

EPSRC still expects to continue with funding for the CDT model, however, as with all of our investments we would need to consider the priority areas in line with the strategy for each of our research areas and be careful of avoiding the duplication of funding through any investments to be made.

How long will the Institute be funded for and what will happen when this funding ends?

The ISCF funding for this project is for an investment up to March 2021 as outlined in the approved Business Case by BEIS. EPSRC, Innovate UK and the APC have a ten-year vision for this programme and will work to ensure that this initial investment is a success which could lead to potential further funding.

Once funded, where does EPSRC expect the Institute to be held?

As discussed with BEIS, the preference is for the Institute to be located in a neutral space which is separate from any of the constituent University organisations.

What business model will the Institute be made operate by?

This is open for consideration and the Director and consortia need be in agreement, however, some models are not suitable for this Institute and interested consortia should speak to EPSRC.

What are the expectations of EPSRC in regards to any Intellectual Property outputs from the Institute?

Any University partner looking to be involved in the Institute, or subsequent research funding, will be bound by the Institute terms and conditions which states that IP arrangements must enable maximum benefit for the UK. Discussions on how this will occur will take place once the Institute has formed.

Can EPSRC define who they expect to see as part of the management hub of the Institute?

EPSRC expects the Institute to be run by a core management team with roles occupied in relation to public engagement, knowledge transfer, training co-ordination, university liaison, communications etc. It is anticipated that those Universities who wish to be involved in the Institute will have given significant thought to how the Institute will be managed and will understand the roles which need to be occupied in order for the Institute to be a success.

What will be the Monitoring and Evaluation expectations for the Institute?

EPSRC expects the Institute and its management team to comply with monitoring and evaluation requirements as defined by EPSRC and BEIS. Although these are as of yet undefined, expectations are this would involve quarterly and annual reporting followed by a full mid-term review taking place after year 2 of the Institute being in operation.

The call document discusses the need for a world leading skills and training programme, but what exactly should this include?

Over the past few months EPSRC has worked with both Industrial and Academic partners to define their needs in terms of training and skills development within this field. Although we would expect the Institute to take the lead on organising this, EPSRC will share a significant summary of the knowledge gained from previous engagement to ensure the correct training and skills needs are being considered for both academia and industry.

The call document discusses broader relevance of the batteries research to sectors other than automotive but I thought this was batteries for electrical vehicles?

Government, EPSRC, Innovate UK and the APC have worked together to form the business case for this programme on the understanding that whilst the development of batteries for electrical vehicles is a key driver behind this research programme, batteries research has significant relevance to a broad range of sectors such as consumer products and healthcare applications, therefore, it would be wrong to limit the remit of this programme.

In terms of the appointment of a Director for the Institute, what expectations do EPSRC have for the expertise this candidate should hold?

EPSRC expects this appointment to be made by the University consortia bearing in mind the significant criteria outlined in the call document. This appointment could come from either academia or from Industry and could initially be a temporary appointment if needs be.

Will EPSRC require evidence of an agreement being in place between the consortia to work together prior to releasing funding for the Institute?

EPSRC expects the University to have agreed to work together prior to the submission of any application proposal. This could potentially be through a written collaboration agreement or something less formal. However, an agreement must be in place prior to the release of funding.

Will there be other director roles for the IUK and APC funding strands of the programme?

The Research Institute Director role will be unique to the EPSRC strand of the ISCF Faraday Challenge. Innovate UK and the APC will operate different funding competitions with more details available on their respective website.

If there are not director roles for the Innovate UK and APC funding, then who has the role of looking after the Innovation/Industrial funding?

All funding across each of the strands of the Faraday Challenge will be subject to scrutiny of overarching governance arrangements; headed by an ISCF Challenge Director for the programme who will have oversight of each strand of funding and have the capability to alter the resources awarded to each funding stream should it be deemed necessary.

Experience indicates that aligning EPSRC and Innovate UK activities can be very difficult. What steps are in place to make this process easier?

This is not a business as usual approach for either Innovate UK or EPSRC. It is critical to the importance of this overall programme that the fundamental research produced by EPSRC funding can be translated through to future funding by Innovate UK. Governance arrangements are in place to have an oversight between both funding programmes and to ensure this translation is occurring. Alongside this the Research Institute funded by EPSRC as part of the Faraday Challenge must engage with both academia and Industry to ensure this is occurring.

How will the research being supported align to RCUK policy/strategy for the next ten years in line with the ten-year challenge vision?

As we are all aware, RCUK and Innovate UK are in the process of moving towards joining together within UKRI. Current decisions over Research Council strategy and policy will be informed by UKRI and the success of the Faraday Challenge will have a factor in assessing the future scientific strategy of the research councils and Innovate UK.

Do/Should Universities looking to be involved in the Institute be seeking to bring in at least 10% Industrial contribution to bid for the Institute?

EPSRC are not mandating a cash contribution from Industry for involvement with the Institute. However, consortia should seek to gain contributions from Industry which reflect the necessary contribution for the Institute to be a success.

How are the IP arrangements of the Institute anticipated to work?

The Intellectual Property arrangements of the Research Institute will be decided in collaboration between the consortia leading the Research Institute and EPSRC. This will depend on the business model adopted by the Research Institute. However, all IP arrangements in place must ensure that outputs of this programme must maximise benefit for the UK.

Who will make the final decisions in regards to calls in future competitions from the Institute?

Future funding competitions administered by the Research Institute will follow EPSRC procedures and run open, robust and transparent peer review process to inform future funding decisions. EPSRC will maintain a key governance rule in ensuring that all future funding competitions are open and transparent processes.

If I apply to the Institute can I also apply for research funding through the Fast Start projects?

Yes, applications to form the Research Institute will not exclude applicants from applying for funding for the 'Fast Start' Research Challenge projects. Applicants should however consider that both of these calls are open competitions and are subject to the EPSRC Repeatedly Unsuccessful Submission policy. (More information on this policy can be found here <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/applicationprocess/basics/resubpol/rua/>)

Will those successful in the research call become Institute members by proxy?

As yet this is undecided and will be a decision for the Research Institute to make. It is clear however, that those funded through the 'Fast Start' Research Challenge, research projects call must agree to abide by the terms and conditions of research aligned to the Research Institute including Intellectual Property arrangements.

Can you say anything in regards to a potential conflict between the training programme supported through the Faraday Challenge and any future calls for Centre for Doctoral Training?

As with all strategic interventions made by EPSRC, the research landscape and the skills and training required for the UK to be a strong and vibrant research community will be our first priority. This will include considering large investments currently in place. No

decision has yet been made in regards to future funding for Centres for Doctoral Training.

How much money will go to those first four fast-start projects?

For the 'Fast Start' projects £28 million for up to three years' funding has been made available for these projects. EPSRC expects to fund one project in each of the fast start project areas. When in place the Research Institute may choose to provide supplementary funding to projects within these areas.

What about Repeated Unsuccessful applications?

As this is an open call, any applications made will be bound by the repeatedly unsuccessful applications policy and more information can be found here <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/applicationprocess/basics/resubpol/rua/>.

Is having a business model already in place part of the call criteria?

Yes. Consortia must have an agreed business model in place ahead of submission of a proposal for the Research Institute call in order to commence operations immediately upon award of the grant. EPSRC recommends that any consortia considering applying to this call should have discussed this internally with the relevant University staff and advice streams available. All interested consortia should contact EPSRC to discuss their business model and application plans.

What are the restrictions on Institutional Submissions?

There are currently no restrictions on the number of submissions an Institution can make to either the Research Institute or the Fast Start research projects calls. However, applicants should be minded that EPSRC operates a repeatedly unsuccessful submissions policy and that any proposals submitted to this call will be counted under this policy.