

Quick Reference

Please note that you must read the full Call document for guidance before submitting your proposal

Prosperity Partnerships: EPSRC, Business and Universities – Second call

Call type: Expression of Interest

Closing date: 16:00 on 12 October 2017

Related themes: All themes

Funding Available: £20 million is available to fund between four and eight programmes

How to apply: Expression of interest followed by full proposals.

Assessment Process: Expressions of interest will be assessed by an EPSRC panel. Full proposals will be invited following the EOI stage; these will be assessed by postal peer review and an interview panel.

More than half of the proposed research should fall within EPSRC's remit. EOI's that are not sufficiently within EPSRC's remit will not be invited to submit full proposals.

Key Dates:

Activity	Date
Deadline for EOI submissions	16:00 12 October 2017
EOI Assessment Panel	w/c 06 November 2017
Invitation to submit full proposal	w/c 06 November 2017
Full proposal submission deadline	13 February 2018

Additional information: EOIs must be submitted by the lead business partner. Any business may lead on only one bid, but may be a contributor to other bids. A university may be involved in more than one bid.

Contacts:

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Summary

EPSRC wishes to support existing, strategic, research-based partnerships between business and universities by providing an opportunity for co-investment in large-scale, TRL 1-3 research programmes which address EPSRC's Prosperity Outcomes Framework (expressed at the level of the Ambitions within the Outcomes Framework)

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/plans/deliveryplan/prosperityoutcomes/>

The strategies of the universities and businesses involved should also be addressed.

Up to £20 million is available to support between four and eight programmes.

Consortia may be formed of multiple businesses and universities, but an existing strategic relationship must be in place between the lead business and university partners.

Co-creation of the research programme is essential and EPSRC expects programmes funded through this call to drive forward shared research challenges, demonstrate impact including clear benefits to the business(es) involved and contribute positively to the overall strategic partnership framework which exists between the parties. To this end, it should be clear that each party is making a distinct intellectual contribution to the partnership. Additionally, as a co-investment opportunity, this call requires the business and university partners to commit substantial cash contributions to the programme.

The call process will be in two stages, with an initial expression of interest stage which **will be led by the main business partner**.

EOIs will be rank ordered by EPSRC and expert advisors as required according to the criteria set out below and it is expected that EPSRC will take forward proposals that represent a demand of approximately double the available budget. Consortia which are successful at the EOI stage will be invited to submit full proposals, which will be assessed by postal peer review and a panel interview.

EPSRC encourages cross-disciplinary research and recognises that many Prosperity Partnerships will be inherently cross-disciplinary, but the majority of the proposed research should fit within EPSRC's remit. Proposals that are not sufficiently within EPSRC's remit will be rejected prior to peer review.

Background

EPSRC has a strong track record of working closely with universities and business to develop high-quality funding programmes which deliver world-leading academic research whilst also delivering impact to business and the wider economy, through a variety of different routes. We recognise that businesses are increasingly developing strategic partnerships with key universities where they have shared research challenges and complementary capabilities. This call is aimed at co-investing in such partnerships, capitalising on the existing relationships to drive forward excellent research with impact which addresses areas of national (and international) importance.

Prosperity Partnerships form one approach within EPSRC's suite of activities to link business investment with our portfolio and provides an exciting opportunity for businesses and universities to co-invest alongside EPSRC.

For more information about EPSRC's portfolio and strategies, see our website: <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/>

Funding available

Up to £20 million is available to support between four and eight programmes. There is a requirement that applicants will match the funded value of the grant (80% of the full economic cost) with a cash contribution (see below for worked example). This matching contribution must be in the form of an auditable transfer of funds from the business partners to the academic partners and/or salary costs of business partner employees working full time (for a reasonable period of the project) and making contributions to the research effort or project management and/or new activities funded by a partner University. Examples of cash contributions include:

- Fully funded individuals working full time on the programme (e.g. PhD students and research associates) with an emphasis on co-location of researchers;
- New equipment purchased for use on the programme; equipment provided by a business partner at a reduced cost is not eligible;

Worked example: A five-year grant costing £0.5 million per annum (pa) would cost a total of £2.5 million. The total funded value of this grant would be 80% of FEC, or £2 million. This value would have to be matched by the business and university partners over the duration of the grant, so approximately £400,000 pa auditable cash transfer for five years. The total value of the whole programme would be a minimum of £4.5 million, excluding in-kind contributions.

Please note, as an exception to this, student fees and stipends on research grants and some support costs related directly to the training of the student are not funded under the same FEC arrangements as for research staff, so these need to be costed appropriately and taken into account for total matching of grant funding by the business partner.

EPSRC requires student fees and stipends, and the items of student support training costs, such as Travel & Subsistence, Conference costs and Consumables to be costed appropriately funded for the EOI application. (Indirect and Estate costs are not applicable to studentships)

In this case, with a five-year grant costing a total of £2.5 million, (including total associated studentship costs of £500,000), the total funded value of this grant would be 80% of £2 million = £1.6 million, plus £0.5 million associated student costs = £2.1 million. The total funded cost per year would be £420,000; and this would be the approximate auditable cash transfer by the business partner per year for five years.

Equipment

Where possible, researchers are asked to make use of existing facilities and equipment, including those hosted at other universities. If equipment is needed as part of the research proposal, applicants must follow EPSRC's rules for requesting equipment over £10,000 in value. Individual items of equipment between £10,000 and £400,000 can be included on proposals for this call if the equipment is essential to the proposed research and if no appropriate alternative provision can be accessed but research organisations will be expected to make a contribution to the cost. Given that capital provision has been reduced by about 50%, contributions of this order of 50% of the full cost of the equipment will be expected. Additional justification of the requirement for individual items of equipment between £10,000 and £400,000, and details of the proposed contribution to the cost of the equipment must be provided in the justification of resources. For any items or combined assets with a value above £138,000 (including VAT) a two-page Equipment Business Case must also be included in the full proposal documentation.

Items of equipment for instrument development will not need to be co-funded by another partner or go through the strategic equipment process. Equipment for instrument development should be integral to a research proposal. Items of equipment for instrument development will be funded at 100% full economic costing (fEC), although EPSRC reserves the right to request institutional contributions in exceptional circumstances. A proposal will be classed as instrument development where it is wholly or mainly focussed on creating a novel instrument that will either enable research capability not available using any existing instrument, or will substantially improve research capability beyond what currently exists, in a way that opens up significant new scientific opportunities.

Please note that equipment that is donated and academic discounts on equipment will be classed as in-kind contributions and will not count towards the total cash contribution in this call. High performance computing equipment is excluded from this call.

For more information on equipment funding and guidance on how to prepare an Equipment Business Case, please see:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/themes/researchinfrastructure/subthemes/equipment/>

Doctoral Students

Funds for doctoral studentships may be applied for as part of the resources requested from EPSRC for this call for proposals. Inclusion of doctoral students presents an exciting opportunity to place students in industrially relevant environments, draw together vibrant and balanced teams which combine

doctoral and post-doctoral research and build leadership for the future in key areas of the economy.

Doctoral studentships must add value to the proposed research outlined in bids to this call, whilst providing a clear opportunity for a distinct and independent course of enquiry for the student. Therefore, the research grant should still be viable without the studentship and should have distinctive objectives that are not reliant upon the studentship(s)

Doctoral students supported through Prosperity Partnerships must be embedded within a high quality research team, and be provided with the opportunity to develop their substantive research skills as well as with broader professional development opportunities.

EPSRC would expect studentships for this call to be four years in length and the length of the studentship(s) must not exceed the length of the grant they are associated with.

Where doctoral studentships are requested, EPSRC would also expect to see requests for post-doctoral research associates; the studentship(s) should not be the only research staffing resource on the application. Careful consideration should be given to the overall staff resource on the Prosperity Partnership and the balance between the different types of staff resource available.

Studentship costings

We would expect the RCUK minimum stipend and indicative fee to be met, but we would fund enhanced stipends where this is justified in the application.

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/training/>

Student fees and stipends on research grants and some support costs related directly to the training of the student are funded by EPSRC. These support costs include such items Travel & Subsistence, Conference costs and Consumables. (Indirect and Estate costs are not applicable to studentships).

Eligibility

At the EOI stage, EPSRC expects that bids will be led by the main business partner. Any business may lead on only one bid, but may be a contributor to other bids. A university may be involved in more than one bid either as lead or as a partner. At the full proposal stage, bids will be submitted by the lead university partner via the Je-S system.

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/>

As this call is a targeted funding opportunity provided by EPSRC, higher education institutions, and some research council institutes and independent research organisations are eligible to apply. A list of eligible organisations to apply to EPSRC is provided at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>

RCUK and EPSRC standard eligibility requirements are applicable for students for this call.

How to apply

The lead business contact **must** discuss their interest in submitting an application with EPSRC who will advise on the suitability of the application. At this stage applications will be either invited to submit or not, based on their fit with the scope and criteria for the call, and fit to the remit of EPSRC. **EOI submissions that have not been discussed with EPSRC and subsequently invited will not be accepted.**

Invited EOIs will be submitted by the lead business partner who will receive a link and password to a SmartSurvey form. The EOI will be a co-creation between the business and university partners. It will be **four** pages of A4 paper using 11pt Calibri font and 2cm margins. It will be uploaded as a .pdf document to the survey.

Guidance on writing an EOI application

The four-page EOI document must cover the following sections:

Track record. Details of the proposed Business and Academic teams, and their esteem and expertise. The lead University and Business should provide clear experience of working together in a strategic manner (for example a history of substantial collaborations covering multiple projects over several years) as well as evidence of intent to work together strategically in the future.

Vision and ambition. A brief description of the vision of the proposed programme of work and collaboration, alongside a discussion of the expected outcomes and impacts. This should include the business benefits, demonstrating alignment to national priorities including EPSRC's Prosperity Outcomes Framework (expressed at the level of the Ambitions within the Outcomes Framework) and the business partners' R&D strategy.

How the research proposed fits to EPSRC remit.

Additionality. An explanation of how the proposed work will benefit from being a coherent programme co-created by industry and academia and how longer term funding and support from business, academia and EPSRC will be exploited to deliver a programme of activity that will accelerate impact. The proposal should clearly articulate how business and university leverage on EPSRC funding will deliver additionality.

Studentship training. This section must include how applicants will ensure that the doctoral student(s) will have a high quality training and academic research experience and can ensure that they can meet the descriptor for the award of a doctoral degree <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

Additionally, the applicants should clearly state how the doctoral studentships add value to the proposed research, whilst providing a clear opportunity for a distinct and independent course of enquiry for the student. The doctoral studentship must not be on the critical path for research grant delivery.

Management and Governance. This must include management and governance arrangements which are appropriate to the scale of the investment, fit within the existing strategic framework between the partners and ensure delivery of the stated outcomes and impacts.

Outline Budget. A draft budget for the programme of work; this must be within 10% of the final budget if approved for full proposal submission and cover both the EPSRC and business/university contributions to the programme. Capital equipment requirements should be highlighted as part of the outline budget.

For advice on writing proposals see:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/preparing/>

Assessment

Assessment process

EOIs will be rank ordered by EPSRC and expert advisors as required according to the criteria set out below and it is expected that EPSRC will take forward proposals that represent a demand of approximately 200% of the available budget. Groups who are successful at the EOI stage will be invited to submit full proposals, which will be assessed by postal peer review and a panel interview. EPSRC reserve the right to apply additional selection criteria in the event of the call being so substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable as initially planned.

Assessment criteria for the EOI stage

- Track record of the researchers, business R&D activities and strong evidence of strategic co-working between the partners.
- Fit of the vision and ambition of the research programme to this call. Fit to the remit of EPSRC.
- Alignment with EPSRC's Prosperity Outcomes Framework, other national strategies, (expressed at the level of the Ambitions within the Outcomes Framework), and the needs of the business partners
- Additionality of the proposed work, including commitment of the partner organisations (both business and universities)
- Quality of doctoral studentship training and experience, and appropriateness for alignment with the Prosperity Partnership.
- Appropriateness of the management and governance arrangements
- Clarity and significance of the benefits to the business and the research base

Feedback

High-level written feedback will be provided to all applicants at the EOI stage.

Moving forward following the EOI stage

Those applicants who have been successful at the EOI stage will be invited to submit a full proposal to EPSRC. Full proposals will be submitted by the lead university via Je-S. Detailed guidance on preparing and submitting full proposals will be provided to those applicants invited to submit. Full proposals should include the following documents:

- Case for support
- Track Record, Management and Governance
- Justification of resources
- Work plan
- Pathways to Impact
- CVs of key personnel
- Project partner support letters
- Institutional support letters
- Equipment documents
- Contingency for equipment (upon invitation by EPSRC only)

The assessment criteria for the full proposal stage are as follows:

- Quality of proposed research
- National Importance
- Added value of this EPSRC Prosperity Partnership investment
- Overall vision and ambition
- Applicant and leadership qualities
- Resources and management
- Impact

Given that strategic partnership arrangements will exist between partners, EPSRC expects that collaboration agreements and arrangements for the management of intellectual property (IP) will be in place ahead of the submission of a full proposal. EPSRC will not specify terms for collaboration agreements or IP arrangements but expects any agreements to recognise the significant amount of public funding being invested in the programme. Applicants may wish to consult the Lambert Toolkit; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/university-and-business-collaboration-agreements-lambert-toolkit> published by the Intellectual Property Office for guidance on this topic.

Submissions to this call will count towards the Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Further information about the policy can be found at: <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/basics/resubpol/rua/>

Key dates

Activity	Date*
Discussion with EPSRC regarding potential EOI submission	By 29 September 2017
EOI submission deadline	16:00 12 October 2017
EOI Assessment panel	w/c 06 November 2017
Invitation to submit full proposal	w/c 06 November 2017
Full proposal submission deadline	13 February 2018
Full proposal interview panel	End May 2018
Full proposals decision	Mid June 2018

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Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Zoe Brown	10 August 2017	1	N/A
Zoe Brown	16 August 2017	1.1	Minor change of text on page 3 to confirm the number of programmes to be supported