<p style="text-align:center"><u>**FAQ Document**</u></p>

<p style="text-align:center"><u>**Becoming the programme director for Enabling a Responsible AI Ecosystem**</u></p>

<u>**Background**</u>

The following questions were asked by attendees of information sessions for <u>Becoming the programme director for Enabling a Responsible AI Ecosystem</u>, which were held on the 4th, 12th, and 25th of May 2022. Information is collated here in order to be more widely accessible. Please see the call specification, accessed via the link above, for comprehensive information about the call, including requirements and assessment.

If you have further questions, please contact the AHRC AI & Design team at <u>ai.design@ahrc.ukri.org</u> and include 'AI programme director opportunity' in the subject line.

<u>**Programme Director Role:**</u>

What is the duration of the director role?

- The initial duration of the programme director grant, and the wider programme, is three years, as this is the length of the spending review period. This programme may have a longer-term funding horizon, if such funding is obtained via a subsequent spending review.

If you are able to prioritise skills for the post, what are the most important to you?

Please refer to the call specification 'What we're looking for' and 'How we will assess your application' sections for detailed requirements and criteria that will be assessed by the panel. During an information session, the following response was provided:

- The following are important: the ability to collaborate and a proven track record of bringing together diverse, and sometimes disparate stakeholders to deliver an impactful programme. We would like a director who brings expertise and an appreciation for interdisciplinary work; it is also important that they understand how non-academic institutions work so they can work effectively with the Ada Lovelace Institute at the interface of research, policy, and practice. Ideally the director will bring academic rigor and authority, which they can meld with Ada's links into different stakeholder communities. The director should have administrative and management skills, in order to effectively manage this multi-part project and its stakeholders.

Regarding job shares, can job share partners come from two different HEIs, or do job share applications need to be from two colleagues in the same HEI?

- Different HEIs are permitted, provided that you are able to provide a good justification in your application and are able to make arrangements with your institutions.

Is the idea to have two people each with about 0.3 FTE time commitment and how feasible do you think this option would be?

- The call mentions 0.6 FTE as the minimum, rather than the maximum for the programme director role. Therefore, in a job share scenario it would be quite feasible for both parties to be working more than 0.3 each on the programme.

Are the programme director and team allowed to apply for the wider programme's subsequent funding calls?

- No, the team supported by this grant will not be eligible for the Collaborative Research Fellowships or Ethical AI Demonstrator calls, as these individuals will be involved in shaping the calls.

Is this role a secondment from an academic post?

- No. The programme director will retain their academic post. The director role is funded by a research grant, and this individual will not become an employee of UKRI through this role.

Are there any additional funds available for the programme director, to support research or other activities?

- Opportunities for funding may arise from other parts of UKRI, and AHRC will be supportive of the programme director pursuing additional funds for their work towards the programme's objectives.

Will AHRC be providing opportunities for matchmaking for potential job share partners?

- Unfortunately, we have been unable to provide matchmaking opportunities for this call due to time constraints. The programme director's ecosystem support activities should result in further connectivity within the research community in preparation for future calls.

Programme Director Team:

Are applicants expected to apply with a large number of named partners?

- No, we are not expecting any additional external partners other than the Ada Lovelace Institute. However, if programme director candidates have existing partnerships that they wish to include, these are welcome and will be assessed as part of the application.

Will the host institution of the programme director be expected to provide co-investment, as is sometimes a feature of large-scale investments?

- There are no specific expectations of co-investment from host institutions. If the host institution can provide administrative or program support as 'in kind' support, this will provide a benefit to the programme but is not a requirement.

Are applicants expected to include specific, named individuals and partners in their proposed project team?

- Applicants may include specific individuals and/or partners in their proposals and may determine that this is necessary to balance out the skills and background of the programme director candidate, but this is not required. We expect that a team will be built at the beginning of the grant term to reflect the delivery plan collectively established by the programme director and the Ada Lovelace Institute. We recognise that some roles may be filled over the course of the grant to reflect the evolution of the programme.

The programme director role clearly has an administrative component to it, so how does AHRC envision the split between research and administration?

- The programme director will have a co-ordinating role in the programme, and we would expect part of the team that will be established to take on administrative duties to enable the director to focus on strategic research. There is no requirement to specify the split, and the AHRC does not have any preferences; the applicant can take any approach that they can justify in the proposal. AHRC will handle the administration of future programme funding calls supported by budget held outside of this grant, to award funds for Ethical AI Demonstrators and Collaborative Research Fellowships.

When referring to "the team", does this mean the Ada Lovelace Institute and the programme director or will other people be hired?

- It will be up to the programme director to comprise their team as they see fit, as long as they meet the requirement to include the Ada Lovelace Institute as the collaborating partner. When discussing "the team", we are referring to the group of people that the applicant will bring together to deliver the proposed programme.

Will some of the funding go towards employing the team to help with delivery?

- Yes, support staff and salaries are eligible costs.

How big does the team need to be and does it need to include industry? Are you looking at a team from one university or from across different universities?

- There is no required size or industry component to the team. The team is more likely to be from a single institution, but applications including multiple HEIs are eligible and should provide clear justification.

Does the applicant need to propose any industry partners?

- There's no upfront requirement for industry partners, but industry engagement and leveraging industry co-investment are potential activities for the programme director.

Working with Ada Lovelace Institute:

As the call requires a letter of support from the Ada Lovelace Institute, will the Institute support proposals that might suggest a different strategic approach to one that Ada has been pursuing so far?

- The Ada Lovelace Institute will support proposals with a different strategic approach, and there is no expectation that the programme director must fall in line with the Institute's strategy. However, the Institute is looking for a degree of alignment to ensure that their work with the director is consistent with their work as an organisation.

The Ada background and role in AI ecosystem documents outline that Ada is looking for somebody with previous experience running a research programme aimed at policy, as well as practical impact working with both academic and non-academic partners. What counts as experience, and is there a minimum requirement?

- Ada is very open to a breadth of experience, and with the programme Ada is really keen to diversify the voices that are in the room in these conversations. There is no minimum requirement from an AHRC perspective. Applicants should provide the panel with evidence that they have the right experience required to deliver the programme.

You have a strong emphasis on the Ada Lovelace Institute, what about the Alan Turning Institute or the TAS Hub? Is there an expectation that these ecosystem members be included in the proposals, as well?

- We are not setting any requirements around who we will expect the programme director to work with, as we recognise that there are a number of actors across the landscape that may be more or less appropriate depending on a specific activity or context. This programme should bring to bear the expertise that exists across the landscape, which includes entities such as the Alan Turing Institute, the TAS Hub, the Schwarzmann Centre, and all of the other AI institutes and centres. Proposals and the subsequent programme should not focus on a single UKRI institute or investment, due to the need to continue diversifying contributing voices.

Remit:

Please note that the call specification highlights the expectation of demonstrable credibility at the intersection of humanities, social science, and STEM disciplines. It also notes: 'We welcome applications from individuals with a strong track record of post-doctoral research working in any discipline, including those whose home discipline is outside of the AHRC's usual remit.' Please refer to the 'What we're looking for' section of the funding opportunity for the call requirements as related to remit.

To what extent do you envision the programme being distinctly arts and humanities research-driven? Are you aiming for a more balanced interdisciplinary approach that will incorporate, for example, fundamental AI research contributions from the technical side?

- The AHRC is leading on this programme, and we would like to see some focus on what the arts and humanities can bring to the programme at large. However, from a composition perspective, we are open to any disciplines and recognise the need for a balanced interdisciplinary approach in which space is made for all disciplines.
- The distinctive contribution from the arts and humanities is in the underpinning and understanding of humanities, including ethics and philosophy as they relate to AI. We want this programme to move beyond talking about ethics and towards thinking more specifically: what does ethics mean in practice, as well as in AI policy and governance?

A lot of work in developing AI responsibly is already being done in the EPSRC sphere; for those who may be from an EPSRC background, how much of a cross-disciplinary approach would you expect?

- We want to break down the disciplinary boundaries; the outcomes are the priority. In regards to remit, since this is an AHRC grant, 50% of the grant needs to be within the AHRC remit. From a disciplinary perspective, we are open to programme director applicants from any background.

Do you have a view of what you consider responsible AI to be?

- This is a big philosophical question and not one that we have attempted to define in this programme call. However, we expect that the programme will explore what responsibility and accountability looks like in relation to AI, delving into how responsibility may look in different circumstances and contexts – for example, what is acceptable in a finance setting may not be acceptable in a healthcare setting.

How many ecosystems are you expecting to be created? When writing proposals, is there any particular industry that you would like applicants to focus on?

- In alignment with the other research councils and Innovate UK, who have taken an agnostic approach in the first instance, we have been careful to avoid giving priority to any particular sectors. However, we do expect priorities to emerge through some of the scoping work and the ecosystem development work that the programme director and the team will be doing with the Ada Lovelace Institute. Applicants may wish to map their proposed vision and priorities to policy agenda priorities, rather than focus on specific sectors. However, where applicants are able to evidence an ability to create a more responsible ecosystem within particular sectors, they are welcome to make that case in their proposal.

Since this activity is meant to be cross-discipline and cross-sector, will the interview panel reflect that, or will it mainly be AHRC remit?

- Both the short-listing panel and interview panel will include researchers from AHRC remit and other councils' remits, as well as industry, third sector, and government representatives.

Is the focus exclusive to the sectors you specified? The National AI Strategy covers the environment/Net Zero. Is this of interest? And other sectors possibly?

- We are very open to the programme director utilising their awareness of the wider landscape and working with Ada, as well as others, to identify priority sectors for interventions.

There is a focus on bridging the gap between foundational research and application/practice. Is it safe to assume that application and practice are in the remit of sustainable skill sets? Or are sustainable skills something to be incorporated into a prospective programme directors' vision?

- We expect the programme to provide benefits in the area of skills. However, skills are not more of a focus than other programme elements.

Costs:

Given that some of the funding will be used for community activities - network building, etc. – what is the expected balance between the budget that will stay within the host institution and the amount of money that will go out?

- We require that at least 30% of the grant will be ringfenced for Exceptions, which are paid at 100% of FEC; this is the funding that is to be spent outside of the host institution, including the ringfenced funds for Ada.

Do you expect the university to cover the 0.6 FTE from FEC recovery or is there a possibility of direct buy-out time?

- There is a possibility of direct buy-out of time using the funding or part of the funding that is available through this grant. Different institutions have different policies about FEC recovery and time buy-out, so these are conversations applicants should have with their research office in the first instance.

Do you have a sense of what proportion of the budget should be directed to programme calls, and what is within the programme director's discretionary budget?

- There is a separate funding pot for the programme calls, to be announced this summer, for Ethical AI Demonstrators and Collaborative Research Fellowships. This funding will be retained by AHRC, and the process for the calls will be overseen by AHRC in consultation with the programme director and team. The programme director and team may also choose to have their own funding calls in support of the ecosystem, and the budget allocated for Exceptions may be applied to these activities.

Is there an expectation regarding the allocation/distribution of funding across different types of activities that one might conceive of for the 'ecosystem support' component?

- No, there are no expectations regarding the allocation of funding across different types of ecosystem support activities within the proposed programme. We are expecting the appropriate method of distribution to be decided by the programme director candidates based on their vision and discussion with the Ada Lovelace Institute.

Regarding the ecosystem support pillar of funding, is the primary idea that this be used for activities that support the ecosystem rather than given to ecosystem members, or is there an expectation that funding will be passed on to certain ecosystem stakeholders?

- There is no expectation that ecosystem support funding will be given through funding calls. A prospective programme director may assign that budget to well-considered activities that catalyse the ecosystem, rather than passing the funding on through funding calls. The programme director may also reserve some of this funding, to enable them to respond to emerging opportunities and commission smaller scale test projects.

The call specification suggests that the award value is £3,500,000 and AHRC funds at 80% fEC. Please can you confirm if this means that the fEC can exceed £3,500,000 as long as the funding remains below £3,500,000? Or is it meant that the total value of the project should be no more than £3,500,000 and this is the figure that you will fund at 80%.

- Your AHRC award will not exceed £3.5m, including the sum total of directly incurred, directly allocated, and indirect costs (at 80% fEC) and exceptions (at 100%). As per usual funding rules, the 80% fEC contribution is expected to be based on TRAC methodology, with the institution responsible for the remaining 20%. It is possible for the fEC of your proposal to be higher than £3.5m, provided the additional funding required has already been committed by a third party.

Can you confirm please that FEC overheads eligible for funding under this call. These costs appear to be eligible as per the call information but it would be reassuring for you to confirm that they're eligible please.

- Overheads, estates and other indirect costs are eligible and must be justified in the Justification of Resources.

Are teaching replacement costs eligible for funding under this call?

- Programme Director salary costs are eligible but no further funding is provided for teaching replacement costs. (see RGC14d in the UKRI Guidance to fEC grant T&Cs: UKRI-291020-guidance-to-fEC-grant-terms-and-conditions.pdf)

How is the 30% ring-fenced exceptions costs defined? Is this 30% of the 100% cost?

- We anticipate that around 30% of the AHRC contribution will be made up of exceptions, paid at 100% FEC.

Impact:

Please see the 'Expected Programme Outcomes' subheading of the 'What we're looking for' section of the call specification for more information related to impact.

What impact would you expect and to whom?

- In the short term the impacts are likely to be centred on policy and practice. We have been discussing with the Office for AI the wider policy implications of extending AI capabilities. The governance of AI is the focus of these conversations, including how the governance of AI can stimulate and support responsible innovation. We would expect the research supported through this programme to inform changes in the way that regulations and standards are established. Furthermore, the programme would support SMEs and micro-businesses in how they can absorb the capacity needed to deal with new regulations and implement them responsibly as well as support them in bringing in new AI capabilities in a safe and responsible way. You can read more in the call under 'What we're looking for' in a subheading 'Programme Ambition'.

Does the focus on social sciences/STEM/Humanities take into account the role of business schools in being able to advise on how to effect change within organisations?

- Management and business studies fall within the social sciences, which are included in the call specification. We are taking a broad view of disciplinary interests; if part of the focus of a programme director's proposal is to engage with SMEs and microbusinesses on transforming organisational behaviours, then someone from a business school would be a great addition to the team.

Assessment:

Please see the 'How we will assess your application' section of the call specification for comprehensive information about assessment.

How many proposals would you like to shortlist?

- There is no upper limit to the number of proposals that can be shortlisted. For internal planning purposes, we have estimated that we will receive approximately ten proposals. There are also no restrictions around the number of proposals that can come from one institution – multiple individuals can apply from the same institution.

Documents:

Can you specify what subheadings to use for the case for support?

- We have not specified a case for support template for this call as the output will not be a traditional research project. As long as the case for support does not exceed seven sides of A4, details how you meet the specification and intend to deliver the programme objectives, you may set out the content however feels most appropriate for you and your plans.

Is there a template for the narrative CVs?

- There is no required template for this application process, the only specification is that it must be within the two A4 page limit. You are very welcome to include relevant publications, however the focus of a narrative CV should be on your experience.

Do you have any guidelines regarding the ethical information requested as part of the documents to submit?

- • The ethical information provided should be in relation to the activities proposed, i.e., outlining relevant ethical risks and mitigations. It is also advisable to link to the assessment criteria, for example plans for maximising the programme's diversity of contributing voices and equality of access. Since the ethical information required will vary between proposals depending on the scope of the activities proposed, we have not set a specific page limit. Ethical information may be provided as a separate document or integrated into the other sections of your application as is most appropriate.