FAQ – ESRC community engagement webinars on our Strategic Delivery plans

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## Community Engagement

**Will there be further community engagement activities during the Strategic Delivery Plan period? How can we get involved in these?**

Yes, we are intending to run more community engagement activities. We will advertise any events through the UKRI-ESRC website.

To subscribe to UKRI updates including funding opportunities, news and event alerts, sign up at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKRI/subscriber>

## UKRI strategic delivery plans and budget information

**Where can I find details on the other Council’s strategic delivery plans and budgets?**

The strategic delivery plans are all published here [UKRI unveils detailed plans for research and innovation – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/news/ukri-unveils-detailed-plans-for-research-and-innovation/?_ga=2.66055847.884409826.1666602710-1380502712.1655110527) and are available to download.

A detailed breakdown of UKRI’s budget allocation for the next 3 years can be downloaded here [UKRI’s budget allocation explainers – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-budget-allocation-explainers/).

**How do ESRC allocate their funding to support a range of different schemes and opportunities?**

Our strategy is developed on the basis of a wide variety of inputs, including internal and external advice. We are committed to maintaining a balance between our thematic portfolios, skills and talent, data, infrastructure and methodological developments, and researcher-driven responsive research. As such, budgets are allocated to ensure that an appropriate balance is achieved to support diverse routes to research funding.

## Government Appointments

**Is there an appointed Minister for Science, Research, and Innovation?**

George Freeman was appointed Minister of State in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 26 October 2022. His responsibilities include:

• Science and research (domestic & international)

• Horizon Europe Membership

• Innovation Strategy / Science Superpower

• Space Strategy

• Technology, Strategy and Security

• Artificial Intelligence (Office for AI)

• Fusion

• R&D People & Culture Strategy

• Research Approvals

• UKRI

• ARIA

• Intellectual Property

Nusrat Ghani has been appointed Minister of State and Minister for Industry and Investment Security. Her responsibilities include:

• Advanced manufacturing (including aerospace, Made Smarter, defence)

• Automotive (including Office for Zero Emission Vehicles)

• Infrastructure and materials (incl. steel, EII, chemicals, construction)

• Life Sciences (including vaccine production)

• Professional and business services

• Industrial decarbonisation

• Economic Shocks

• Supply Chains

• Levelling up / regional growth

• Secondary Legislation

• Skills

• Maritime and Shipbuilding

• Critical Minerals and Critical Mineral Supply Chains

• Investment Pipeline and Opportunities

• Investment Security

• REUL

• Brexit Opportunities

• Better Regulation

**Working with the Secretary of State**

The Secretary of State has overall responsibility for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which brings together responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation and energy.

## Talent

**What does UKRI’s Collective Talent funding mean in practice?**

Through Collective Talent Funding UKRI will further integrate our capability to maximise the impact of our talent investments. This will improve our support for career development, simplify application and management policies and processes, incentivise diverse career paths, and remove barriers to ensure that researchers and innovators have access to a competitive support package irrespective of discipline. Through this approach, we can streamline our operational expenditure and improve the clarity of UKRI’s talent offers, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of UKRI talent support. Recognising the nature of our talent commitments, this is a long-term programme of change, and full implementation will occur over multiple spending reviews. How this collective approach will work in practice requires further careful thought and planning which is underway. There will not be any immediate changes

## Support for mid-career researchers

**How do our funding schemes aim to reduce the job insecurity of mid-career academic researchers- a key pillar of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers?**

As our funding schemes only benefit a small proportion of the overall social science community, issues concerning precarity require a broader set of initiatives beyond individual funding schemes. Of particular note is the UKRI Concordat Action Plan which includes a number of relevant actions, namely:

* Collaborating with other research funders on shared expectations for supporting people’s careers at organisations we fund, including how research organisations can redeploy researchers and offer more secure and sustainable employment.
* Review and revise assessor guidance to ensure grants are appropriately staffed and researchers are supported to develop their careers.
* Setting expectations (and assessing) leadership and management of our grant applications
* Ensuring our funding service is flexible enough to support a range of staffing models.
* Funding assurance for non-financial, i.e. culture and environment, terms and conditions.
* Considering how we can support research culture in the next REF
* Working with sector partners to understand what the financial and non-financial barriers to secure employment are.

**What are ESRC’s plans for pilot initiatives around supporting leadership capabilities for mid-career researchers, and the timelines for this?**

ESRC is planning to appoint a team to design and deliver a pilot research leadership development programme tailored to the need of mid-career and senior researchers in the social sciences. This pilot will begin in 2023 and if effective, we will consider expanding to a wider group to support the development of a pipeline of research leaders in the social sciences.

## UKRI funding opportunities

**Where can I find details on ESRC’s open and upcoming funding opportunities?**

All of our funding opportunities are published on the Funding Finder, accessed here [Opportunities – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/?filter_council%5B%5D=818&filter_status%5B%5D=open&filter_status%5B%5D=upcoming&keywords=&filter_order=publication_date&filter_submitted=true).

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**Has the next Centres competition been announced** **yet?**

The pre-announcement for the ESRC Centres competition has been published on the Funding Finder. The outline application stage will open in February 2023. Please keep an eye on the funding opportunity as it’s likely that the information will be updated. Link [Pre-announcement: ESRC centres – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/esrc-centres/)

## Improving how we work

**When will the new funding service be ready for applicants and what are the changes that the research community will see and by when?**

The UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service is being developed with applicants and other users’ needs at the heart of its design.To continuously improve the service, it is being built iteratively, with new functionality and updates regularly released. During this phase, the new Funding Service will run in parallel to UKRI’s current online systems for managing funding, such as the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system.From January 2024, research council opportunities will be launched and managed in the Funding Service. <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/improving-your-funding-experience/>

## Horizon Europe

**What is UKRI’s role in delivering the transitional measures and long-term alternatives?**

The UK government has stated that its priority remains association to Horizon Europe, as both the UK and the EU agreed under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement last year, and that it stands ready to formalise UK association.

However, ongoing delays in this process have led to uncertainty for researchers, businesses and innovators based in the UK. As a result, in November 2021, the UK government launched its Horizon Europe Guarantee Scheme to provide funding to researchers and innovators unable to receive their Horizon Europe funding while the UK is in the process of associating to the programme.

The Government has now announced £484 million funding to support the UK R&D sector, talent and infrastructure while the delay in association continues. UKRI is delivering £280 million of this total.

More details on how our funding will be delivered is available here <https://www.ukri.org/news/280m-to-support-uk-research-and-innovation-during-horizon-europe-delay>

For queries about the transition measures and longer-term arrangements, please read the UKRI web page [Horizon Europe: help for UK applicants – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/horizon-europe/) or contact horizoneuropealternatives@ukri.org