

## UKRI UK Future Internet NetworkPlus Funding Opportunity.

### 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 Webinar – Questions and Answers

This is a summary of the questions asked at the UKRI Future Internet NetworkPlus funding opportunity webinar on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Some questions and answers have been rephrased for clarity. Some questions we have received via email have also been included. Information is correct at time of publication in late July 2024. The funding opportunity webpage [UK future internet NetworkPlus: outline – UKRI](#), and subsequently the funding opportunity webpage for full applications, should be used as the definitive source of information about this opportunity. The answers given here are not intended to override this webpage, nor any published UKRI policies or guidance. Where possible, links to relevant UKRI webpages have been included in this document.

A common theme is that attendees asked us for more detail or an interpretation of language in the funding opportunity webpage. For fairness, we are not able to expand on intentions behind the published wording at this stage, and applicants should take the published wording at face value. Assessors will also be required to adhere to the published wording in making their assessment. Applicants should plan to achieve their objectives in a way they consider suitable and consistent with the published wording, and aim to make a strong case for their approach to the assessors.

	Questions	Answers
	<b>Webinar</b>	
1.	Why were applicants not able to interact with each other during the webinar?	This is usual practice for funding opportunity webinars. It preserves confidentiality for applicants and makes the webinar more manageable for UKRI. However, we have now provided a platform for collaboration and consortium-building, to supplement your usual approaches to consortium-building. This is in the Additional Information section of the funding opportunity webpage and may also be accessed directly here: <a href="#">UK Future Internet NetworkPlus: networking and consortium-building - UK Research and Innovation - Citizen Space (ukri.org)</a>
	<b>Workshops</b>	
2.	When will workshop reports be made available?	We are looking to publish the workshop outputs as soon as they are ready.
	<b>Project Lead/Project Co-Leads/Project Partner/Organisation</b>	
3.	Is a named applicant the same as a Co-I?	We have said that you may be a named applicant in no more than one application submitted to this funding opportunity. Being a named applicant in this sense refers only to being named as project lead or project co-lead in an application. Project co-lead is the new UKRI terminology for Co-I (see <a href="#">Roles in funding applications: eligibility, responsibilities and costings guidance – UKRI</a> )
4.	Am I right in thinking that there are no institutional/departmental limits on number of submissions (only individual)?	An individual may be a named applicant in no more than one application submitted to this funding opportunity. We have not imposed any limits on the number of applications per institution or department. We understand that the grant will require support from the host institution and that in practice, host institutions may not wish to or be able to support multiple applications.

5.	It was mentioned that minor costs can be covered for partners. Is there an estimate of what is considered "minor" and how that could be spent by the partners? Is it limited to funding project partners travel to attend the network+ meetings?	Please see requirements for project partners here: <a href="#">Project partners letter of support – UKRI</a> . The UKRI standard terms and conditions guidance also contains guidance on project partners and is available here: <a href="#">Terms and conditions for research grants – UKRI</a> . Specific queries as to the eligibility of costs for project partners beyond small amounts for travel and subsistence should be directed to UKRI.
6.	Can a SME/Startup organisation be a participant in the call? Can an SME/Startup be a project partner? How can SMEs engage?	<p>We welcome the involvement of businesses with applications to this opportunity. Project leads and project co-leads need to meet EPSRC eligibility criteria, which includes meeting UKRI's criteria for institutional eligibility (<a href="#">Eligibility as an organisation – UKRI</a>). This means that project leads and project co-leads generally can't be primarily based in industry (including SMEs and start-ups), and industry partners can't generally claim significant costs from the grant (see <a href="#">Project partners letter of support – UKRI</a>). However, people based in industry are welcome as part of an application team and as contributors to an application, for example as a project partner (<a href="#">Project partners letter of support – UKRI</a>), or in another capacity such as an advisor or initial network member.</p> <p>We have now provided a platform for collaboration and consortium-building, to supplement your usual approaches to consortium-building. This is in the Additional Information section of the funding opportunity webpage and may also be accessed directly here: <a href="#">UK Future Internet NetworkPlus: networking and consortium-building - UK Research and Innovation - Citizen Space (ukri.org)</a></p>
7.	Can you comment on how the possible expansion of the team will work in the full stage? Is there a limit on how many can be in the team at the full stage? And can we already plan it in in the outline stage? (i.e., if selected, we will add the following people to the outline)	<p>The limit of one project lead and seven project co-leads will remain the same for both stages. This constraint on the core leadership team (the number of funded co-leads) is not intended to limit the size of the broader team, which may include project partners, advisors, initial network members, or people involved in any other group or mechanism you plan into the structure of your NetworkPlus. A core aim of this NetworkPlus opportunity is to enable networking activities and support collaborations.</p> <p>Yes, you can plan regarding your project team and project partners at the outline stage. Further collaborators are expected to be detailed at full application stage (as compared to the outline stage), such as more project partners. This addition of detail to the applications between the stages is intended to ensure that those preparing outline applications do not have to produce an inappropriate level of detail, as well as to allow the natural development of plans, and to allow those unsuccessful at outline stage to join other consortiums.</p>

8.	Would you like us to include a list of potential participants in the outline or full proposal? Does it make sense for us to talk broadly to the community, and include the list of people who state they would be interested in participating?	<p>There is no formal requirement to include a list of potential participants in the proposal at either stage. Applicants can therefore decide to what extent they wish to share a list of potential participants at the outline or full application stage.</p> <p>It is the decision of the applicants how broadly they wish to consult the community at the application stage, and how this is addressed in their application. There are some formal role types, such as project co-leads, project partners and visiting researchers, but this is not intended to limit the number of people who may be involved in other capacities.</p>
9.	Could you comment on any institutional match/in-kind expectations?	There are no additional financial requirements on institutions for this funding opportunity, beyond the usual requirement that UKRI will fund 80% of the full economic cost of the project and the organisation must agree to find the balance of the full economic cost for the project from other resources. We will likely require a statement at full application stage to confirm that the institution is able to support the administration and governance that will be required to run this large and potentially multi-institution grant effectively. More details will be given at the full application stage.
10.	An inclusive proposal might gain from more than 8 organizations. Any suggestions on how to include more organizations in the proposal?	We welcome inclusive approaches in the proposal. There is a limit of one project lead and seven project co-leads for this funding opportunity. However, people from other organizations may be included in other roles such as project partners, advisors, initial network members, visiting researchers, or people involved in any other group or mechanism you plan into the structure of your NetworkPlus.
11.	Could you expand on the projects funded through the Network Plus grant? Is there an expectation with respect to the number and individual/total volume of funding?	The NetworkPlus is expected to undertake a variety of activities, including events, open funding opportunities, and horizon scanning. Applicants are encouraged to tailor their activities and resourcing to the needs of the area and to be innovative in their approach. We have not set out an expectation for the total cost of the projects funded by the grant, nor the number of projects.
<b>Application Cost</b>		
12.	Can cost estimates change between outline and full application, if so by how much?	Project Costs are indicative only at outline stage and will not be assessed at this stage. Between the outline and full application stages, the total cost must not change by more than 10% and must not exceed the maximum value allowed under this funding opportunity.
13.	Will there be a traditional resources and costs section on TFS to submit the cost estimates at outline stage?	There is a separate section on the Funding Service for “Resources and costs” where applicants should add the details of their project costs. At the outline stage, you are only required to provide the approximate total values for the expected directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect costs and exceptions. Justification of resources is not required at the outline stage but will be required as usual in the full application stage.
<b>Use Cases</b>		

14.	Are use cases expected to have (any) direct funding?	NetworkPlus funds should be allocated as appropriate to achieve the aims of the funding opportunity. This includes allocating funds to the place-based case studies work. How this funding is allocated to this work should be determined by the NetworkPlus team.
15.	Is it expected that each use case is led by a local investigator from that particular region or is it possible to have partners (who are not investigators) supporting that use case instead? If so, do you expect letters of support confirming that commitment included in the outline proposal?	We have left the requirements for the place-based case studies broad in the funding opportunity document. We welcome applicants' innovative approaches to meeting the requirements of the opportunity. Letters of support from project partners are not required at the outline stage but will be required for each proposed project partner at the full application stage. See: <a href="#">Project partners letter of support – UKRI.</a>
<b>Application Outcome</b>		
16.	Can you please elaborate which types of applications will be made public to support collaboration (such as: successful or unsuccessful/provisional/full applications)?	Upon completion of the outline stage, titles of applications that are invited to full application will be published online along with summary and details of the application team, including their names. Specifically, for each successful outline application, we will publish the names of the successful project lead and co-leads, the title of the application, and the text provided in the 550-word 'Summary' section of the application. We encourage the addition of further collaborators and project partners between outline and full proposal. We will publish the outcomes of the full application stage online. We will <b>not</b> publish the details of <b>unsuccessful</b> applications at either the outline or full application stage.
<b>Additional Conditions</b>		
17.	Beyond the number of co-leads, are there any further constraints on the size of advisory or steering groups?	Beyond the number of co-leads, there are no formal constraints on the size of other parts of the structure of the NetworkPlus. Applicants are encouraged to plan a structure (e.g., advisory or steering groups) and membership that will allow them to achieve their objectives. The NetworkPlus must establish and run an independent advisory board, or equivalent body, to oversee the running of the project and provide advice on the strategic direction and activities of the project. The terms of reference and membership of this group (at least 50% independent membership and an independent chair) should be agreed with UKRI. An appropriately sized advisory board with diverse expertise is suggested and UKRI will monitor the process.
<b>Others</b>		
18.	If you receive further questions, will you circulate the answers?	If there are any further questions, please email us at <a href="mailto:digital.security.resilience@epsrc.ukri.org">digital.security.resilience@epsrc.ukri.org</a> We do not intend to update this Q&A document.

These are some other questions which we have received via email.

	Questions	Answers
19.	Will it be possible to have an uncosted project co-lead?	It is possible to include an uncosted project co-lead providing they meet the eligibility criteria. (see <a href="#">Roles in funding applications: eligibility, responsibilities and costings guidance – UKRI</a> )
20.	Can we plan to change the project co-leads later in the project?	<p>The ethos of the NetworkPlus grant type includes limiting the number of academic investigators, in order to prioritise allocation of the funding to the running of the network’s activities. For this reason, only 7 project co-leads are allowed on an application to this opportunity. This is a slightly higher number than usual for a NetworkPlus, in recognition of the multidisciplinary approach that will be needed. This means that you can only list 7 or fewer people with the role type ‘project co-lead’ in the application. It also means that we would also expect only 7 or fewer project co-leads at any one time in the lifetime of the grant. During the lifetime of a grant, it is normal for one or two co-leads to step down and be replaced with appropriate new co-leads, usually due to unforeseen changes in circumstances. If you choose to <b>plan in</b> a change of one or more co-lead at some point in the project’s lifetime as part of your application, we would consider that this is still within the rules of the funding opportunity. As ever, you should consider how this will affect assessors’ assessment of your application, and ensure you are able to make a good case for this approach.</p> <p>We would also note that there are a number of other ways to include people in the project. Roles could include project partners, advisors, initial network members, visiting researchers, or roles in any other group or mechanism you plan into the structure of your NetworkPlus.</p>
21.	How does allocation of flexible funds work, in terms of Directly Allocated vs Directly Incurred? Can the sum awarded under the heading of flexible funds include indirect costs?	<p>The sum awarded under the heading of 'Flexible funds' can include (i.e., be used to pay for) both directly incurred and directly allocated expenditure, including indirect costs. All of these costs should be requested under the “Directly Incurred – Other” heading in your application, and must therefore be reported on the final expenditure statement (FES) as “Directly Incurred – Other” as awarded on the offer letter. A breakdown of the expenditure must be submitted along with the FES. More guidance on this will be provided in the full application guidance. There is no requirement to preserve specific proportions of DA or DI between the outline and full application stage.</p> <p>Flexible funds are awarded by UKRI at 80% of the full economic cost (FEC). Usually they are also paid to organisations funded under the NetworkPlus open calls at 80% FEC, with the receiving organisation making up the 20%.</p> <p>Flexible funds may not be used for studentships or the kind of student costs that would be funded through a training grant.</p>

22.	Do you have any examples of how previous network plus applicants have requested and then allocated out flexible funds?	We are not able to make available examples from applications. Applicants may wish to look at publicly available information about the approaches taken by previous and existing NetworkPlus grant holders on their websites.
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