



Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council



NIHR | National Institute for
Health and Care Research

Technologies to enable independence for people living with dementia.

Questions asked and answered in a webinar on the 5th July 2024

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<p>Is there a minimum requirement for the number of project partners to be involved in the network? How does the EPSRC evaluate the adequacy of the number of project partners involved?</p>	<p>There isn't a minimum requirement for the number of project partners. The number is not formally assessed, and the assessment will look at the quality of partnerships rather than the number.</p> <p>For example, the expert panel will look for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you have designed your work so that it will maximise translation of outputs into outcomes and impacts • how have you provided clear plans for networking and collaborating with a range of relevant communities and stakeholders
<p>Will this call provide funding for Postdoctoral Research Associates (PDRAs)?</p>	<p>You can request funding for PDRAs as part of the funding for feasibility studies and small-scale research studies. All costs for the feasibility studies need to be shown on the application form under 'Directly Incurred other costs' at 80% FEC. The costing should be based on the numbers of projects you are proposing to fund, and the staff resource (including PDRAs) required to develop the research.</p>
<p>One area in scope is using existing technology and extending its use in dementia, is the anticipation that the project team in this case would still be led by those with their primary expertise in dementia or would it be okay to have researchers with dementia expertise as co-leads and the PI to be the lead in technology?</p>	<p>The project leads expertise can be in any area if their expertise can support the vision of the network plus. Assessors will be looking for the following.</p> <p>Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work ▪ the right balance of multidisciplinary skills and expertise to cover the proposed work ▪ the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to bring together and develop others ▪ the appropriate approach to manage and monitor the progress of the programme, including consideration of how the flexibility of resources will be managed ▪ contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community
<p>What is considered 'technology'?</p>	<p>A broad definition of technology is considered. Here is a link to the kinds of health technology projects EPSRC have funded in the past https://www.ukri.org/publications/successful-projects-in-healthcare-technologies/.</p>

<p>We're a non-profit, social enterprise that delivers NHS dementia services, and are experts in health equity and bringing in people with lived experience. Can we apply to this opportunity, or would we have to be subcontracted?</p>	<p>Please find details of UKRI organisation eligibility here: Eligibility as an organisation – UKRI. Social enterprises are not eligible to apply as a lead to this opportunity.</p> <p>Costs for services through the social enterprise could be requested as a subcontracting cost under directly incurred costs. Research organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts is subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety. All costs should be fully documented/invoiced and available to EPSRC if required.</p>
<p>Is this a grant to develop a technology or is it a grant to create a network of partners who want to develop technologies around a theme?</p>	<p>It is a grant to create a network of partners to develop technologies and partnerships around a theme. We are looking to build capacity and bring together new communities across engineering and physical sciences, and health and care, to tackle challenges in dementia research.</p> <p>The 'plus' component of the Network Plus provides funding to carry out small scale proof of concept/feasibility studies.</p>
<p>Is the Expression of Interest stage mandatory?</p>	<p>No, it is not mandatory.</p>
<p>Can the lead applicant be an NHS trust, or does it have to be in academia?</p>	<p>UKRI research grants are open to NHS bodies with research capacity. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the NHS board. ▪ NHS Clinical Commissioning Group ▪ NHS Foundation Trust ▪ NHS Special Authority ▪ NHS Trust ▪ NHS Local Health Board <p>Grants can be used for research and development activities only, not treatment or support costs.</p> <p>Check if you're eligible for funding here: Check if you're eligible for funding – EPSRC – UKRI.</p>
<p>How much of our focus should be about linking with statutory provision vs industry lead innovation?</p>	<p>The focus should be directed on which would have the most benefit to enable people to live independently with dementia.</p>

<p>Our network is being led from the person-centred and design subjects. Engineering, physical sciences, tech etc well-represented but assume ok for network leadership to be from those other areas?</p>	<p>The project leads expertise can be in any area if their expertise can support the vision of the network plus. Assessors will be looking for the following.</p> <p>Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work ▪ the right balance of multidisciplinary skills and expertise to cover the proposed work ▪ the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to bring together and develop others ▪ the appropriate approach to manage and monitor the progress of the programme, including consideration of how the flexibility of resources will be managed ▪ contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community
<p>The NIHR allows all providers of NHS services to bid for their grants, but the UKRI does not. Do we know what rules will apply for this calling?</p>	<p>We will be using EPSRC eligibility criteria for these grants as we will be administering the process. There is some information here on how you can involve NHS costs on your application: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/nhs-costs/.</p> <p>NHS organisations can lead grants if they meet the following eligibility criteria: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/</p> <p>For organisations such as NHS services or Local Authorities who do not meet the eligibility criteria costs can be requested as a subcontracting cost under directly incurred costs.</p>
<p>How can technology partners (private companies) be part of this network? can we cost an industry partner in the grant?</p>	<p>Industrial organisations can be partners on a network. However, industrial organisations are not eligible to receive direct funding from EPSRC. Some minor costs for services could be requested as a subcontracting cost under 'directly incurred costs'. Research organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts is subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety. All costs should be fully documented/invoiced and available to EPSRC if required.</p> <p>More information about how EPSRC works with businesses can be found here: Engage with our funded projects – UKRI.</p>

<p>What are the final deliverables you want from this network plus, given it is academic led?</p>	<p>We are looking to build capacity and bring together new communities across engineering and physical sciences, and health and care, to focus on the use and development of tools and technologies to enable people to live independently with dementia.</p> <p>Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has had considerable success from previous NetworkPlus investments which focus on academic research challenges. These NetworkPlus investments have developed a rich body of outputs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ new collaborations ▪ grant applications ▪ new research methods ▪ horizon scanning reports ▪ new policy ▪ feasibility studies <p>Some examples of Network Plus grants EPSRC have funded in the past are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIOREME (nottingham.ac.uk) • Future Blood Testing for inclusive monitoring and personalised analytics Network+ • About TIDAL N+ - UCL – University College London
<p>The call notes "All costs for the feasibility studies need to be shown on the application form under 'Directly Incurred other costs' at 80% FEC. The costs should cover support for a series of feasibility projects to advance research projects." Does that mean these projects need to be developed before submission or is it just at the level of the overall budget to be applied to these?</p>	<p>They do not need to be developed we expect you to develop this over time with network partners. It is just the overall budget that needs to be applied for.</p>

<p>What is the ideal number of co-investigators for building a good network, and should they all be affiliated with different universities?</p>	<p>There isn't an 'ideal number'. We expect applicants to build an appropriate number of co-investigators relevant to the expertise needed to lead the network. They do not need to be affiliated to different universities, however we are looking for networks to involve a range of expertise and bring together new communities across engineering and physical sciences, and health and care, to focus on the use and development of tools and technologies to enable people to live independently with dementia.</p> <p>Networks should establish multidisciplinary teams and include clinical experts and people with lived experiences to ensure that technologies are developed with the clinical context and user needs in mind.</p> <p>The panel will assess the capability of the applicants and the project team to deliver the project, so please bear this in mind when assembling the network leadership team.</p>
<p>Can we change lead organisation after submitting EOI?</p>	<p>Yes, you can change a lead organisation after the Expression of Interest stage.</p>
<p>Are you looking for multiple feasibility studies or a single comprehensive project? In the proposal, should we focus on various proof-of-concept and feasibility studies, or outline one overall project?</p>	<p>We would expect multiple studies to be funded and identification in the proposal of broad multiple areas of interest. The network will be expected to distribute the funds to test approaches to research challenges identified by the network. Each study will typically be in the region of £50,000 to £100,000. These feasibility funds should be intended to support development of research ideas and generation of proof-of-concept data.</p> <p>The costing should be based on the numbers of projects you are proposing to fund, and the staff resource required to develop the research.</p>
<p>Will the assessors understand the domain of Dementia they are being asked to assess?</p>	<p>We will involve assessors with expertise in dementia, and we will brief the panel, so they understand the aims of this opportunity.</p>
<p>Can we have a Co-I and/or researcher who is not working in UK?</p>	<p>International Researchers are not eligible to be Co-Investigators or researchers on EPSRC grants. Investigators must be academic employees – lecturer or equivalent – of an eligible organisation and must be resident in the UK.</p>

<p>How does the funding work for technical projects within the network? Are network members allowed to receive this funding?</p>	<p>The network will be expected to distribute the funds to test approaches to research challenges identified by the network. The network will be expected to run competitions for the distribution of funds in line with the UKRI Principles of peer review assessment and decision making (https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-principles-of-assessment-and-decision-making/). Network members could receive funding, but they would need to apply to the competition.</p>
<p>Is there any limit on Co-Is?</p>	<p>There isn't a limit on number of Co-Investigators.</p>
<p>You have not mentioned health economics input to address value for money concerns ... could you comment?</p>	<p>Networks are encouraged to include health economics expertise to understand the economic cost of tools and technologies, including to produce the economic data to enable possible implementation in the health and care system.</p>
<p>Can you be an applicant in two different submissions?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Can you lead named on the EoI be changed to another for the full application?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Does the network lead need to be from an EPSRC discipline?</p>	<p>No, the project leads expertise can be in any area if their expertise can support the vision of the network plus.</p>
<p>The aim of the network is to enable independence for people with dementia. However, is developing a solution to support carers (informal and formal carers) within the scope of this call?</p>	<p>Yes, this is within scope. We are looking to support the development of research and communities focused on the use and development of tools and technologies to enable people to live independently with dementia. This includes technologies to support carers.</p>
<p>Would the fund allow experimental research or is it purely to build the network?</p>	<p>Yes, the 'plus' of NetworkPlus is that the grants include funding for feasibility or proof of concept studies. The network will be expected to distribute the funds to test approaches to research challenges identified by the network. Each study will typically be in the region of £50,000 to £100,000.</p>
<p>Does it mean that the vision should focus on how to establish the network instead of a research vision?</p>	<p>Yes, we are looking to build capacity and bring together new communities across engineering and physical sciences, and health and care, to focus on the use and development of tools and technologies to enable people to live independently with dementia. We hope that networks will lead to new collaborations, excellent research applications and inform ideas for future research themes.</p>

<p>What key research output/deliverables would be from this type of network plus project from your experience?</p>	<p>Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has had considerable success from previous NetworkPlus investments which focus on academic research challenges. These NetworkPlus investments have developed a rich body of outputs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ new collaborations ▪ grant applications ▪ new research methods ▪ horizon scanning reports ▪ new policy ▪ feasibility studies
<p>How much/which proportions of the allocated fund will be expected to go to the project lead/feasibility studies/subcontractors or is it down to lead to allocate as needed.</p>	<p>The division of resources will be for the lead to allocate as needed.</p> <p>Assessors want you to demonstrate how the resources you anticipate needing for your proposed work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are comprehensive, appropriate, and justified ▪ represent the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes ▪ maximise potential outcomes and impacts
<p>How would the call/competition for feasibility projects be managed? Solely by network or with NIHR/EPSRC oversight.</p>	<p>We expect the competitions for projects to be managed by the Network with some EPSRC and NIHR oversight which will be communicated under the conditions of the grant.</p>
<p>Can the network be focused in Scotland?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Should we focus on establishing the network inside UK instead of international network</p>	<p>Yes, although you can involve international partners, we are looking for how networks will impact people living with dementia in the UK and relevance to the UK health and care system.</p>