



**Economic
and Social
Research Council**

‘P2R: increasing UK policymaker engagement with research’

**Applicant webinar
12 February 2025**

Welcome

Please note:

- This webinar will be recorded and made available on the UKRI Funding Finder
- A Q&A document will be published on the UKRI Funding Finder
- Your details will be shared with other attendees and potential applicants (unless otherwise specified)

ESRC staff:

- Saskia Smellie, Senior Research Portfolio Manager
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- Lauren Curtis, Grants Manager
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About the Funding Opportunity

Aim Expand UK-wide ‘policy to research’ (P2R) infrastructure, facilitating direct connections between public and civil servants and research organisations. This infrastructure will enable policymakers to build skills and understanding of research, evidence and data in policy development by engaging in relevant activities in an academic setting.

Funding ESRC will fund one investment. The Full Economic Cost of your project can be up to £3.8 million. ESRC has a total fund of £3 million for this funding opportunity.

Structure Funding will commence in February 2026, last 42 months, and will be subject to a formal gateway review following an initial six-month scoping and co-design phase.

Objectives

- Increase the scope and range of P2R infrastructure in the UK
- Provide strategic leadership on policymaker skills development, identifying skills needs and supporting opportunities to meet this demand
- Provide a 'one-stop shop' for P2R opportunities

Applications should develop a '**connective infrastructure**' for public and civil servants to build substantive relationships with the research community while developing their scientific skills and ability to apply research insights.

This infrastructure will support the development of effective public policy based on robust evidence and the expertise of the **UK's world leading research organisations**.

This should be delivered through **various formats**, such as professional development, training, immersive workshops, placements, and networking.

Considerations

- UK-wide P2R infrastructure
- Increase range, diversity and access to P2R opportunities
- Across central, devolved/regional and local government
- Across all career stages
- Sustainability, flexibility and agility to respond to new partners and opportunities
- Consortium of research organisations
- Social science-led, interdisciplinary teams
- P2R expertise
- Partners/research organisations new to P2R activities
- Skills development/talent management expertise
- Six-month scoping and co-design phase before a gateway review

What we will not fund

- Applications that are limited to single academic disciplines.
- Applications that are limited to a specific policy challenge or area of research interest.
- Applications that do not engage with established academic providers in the P2R space.
- Applications that do not include plans to diversify the UK research community's offer through increasing the number and range of research organisations and communities that participate in P2R activities.
- Activities primarily focused on public engagement.
- Activities that allow for researchers moving into policy spaces.
- Applications supporting predominantly only one or two research organisations.
- Applications focused only on UK central government departments.
- Applications focused only on government analysts or on civil servants at a single career stage.
- Associated studentships cannot be funded as part of an application under this funding opportunity.

Key dates



Opportunity closes: 6 May 2025



Panel meeting: July 2025



Interviews: September 2025



Funding commences: 2 February 2026



Scoping and co-design phase (months 0-6): February–July 2026



Gateway review (month 6) before main 3-year funding commences



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Application and Assessment

How to Apply

- You should apply using The Funding Service (TFS) using the **Start application** link on the [UKRI opportunity web page](#)
- Applications must be submitted by the Project Leads Research Organisation (RO) before the submission deadline of 4pm on 06 May 2025
 - You will **not** be able to apply after this time.
 - Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal RO deadlines
 - Please avoid leaving your submission to the last minute. Your RO will need to check this and may need to return it to you for editing before they submit it to ESRC on your behalf.
 - We cannot return applications for amendment through TFS, once submitted you cannot make any changes to your application.
- Please see [further guidance](#) on how to apply through TFS.
- Please follow the [funding opportunity-specific guidance](#) provided, you may also find the guidance on [How to write a good application – ESRC – UKRI](#) useful.

Considerations

- We will fund only one application through this funding opportunity.
- To know if you or a member of your team is eligible for a specific funding opportunity, you must check the criteria in the 'who can apply' section of the opportunity's guidance.
 - Project leads and co-leads must have a substantial relationship with an **organisation eligible for UKRI funding**.
 - Project Co-Leads from UK third sector and business organisations with a justified role on the project can also be included.
 - Research organisations submitting applications will need to ensure they comply with the rules of the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022 when including business or third sector team members.
 - As this is funding to develop UK infrastructure, the inclusion of project co-leads based in non-UK organisations would need to be strongly justified.
 - Project co-leads from International business, third sector or government organisations are **not eligible** to be included in the applicant team.
- Your application must be within the majority of ESRC remit but can draw from the wider sciences.
- Team members and project partners should be asked to contribute to the application but **only** the Project Leads research organisation can **submit** the application to UKRI.

Assessment Process

- We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI.

Details of assessment criteria are available in the How to Apply section of the [opportunity web page](#).

- The assessment process involves a review and shortlisting process by an expert panel, which will shortlist applications for the final interview stage.
- Government partners will be involved throughout all stages of the assessment process.
- If shortlisted, you will be invited to interview the week commencing **15 September 2025**

Evaluation

The evaluation criteria include (but not limited to):

- the need for a compelling vision for the future of P2R infrastructure in the UK
- a clear approach that sets out plans to manage and deliver the proposed infrastructure to expand and diversify the UK research sector's current P2R offering
- a project plan for the scoping stage (the first six months)
- a plan for the main delivery phase (three years)
- evidence of an interdisciplinary, social science-led team from across multiple institutions
- evidence of effective collaboration between policy stakeholders and academic experts
- clear resource and cost justifications
- the project team is expected to think critically about how to ensure the infrastructure's sustainability.
- confirmation of capacity to engage with ESRC's externally commissioned evaluation for this investment.

Useful Links

- [P2R: increasing UK policymaker engagement with research funding finder page](#)
- [How to apply for an opportunity in the Funding Service](#)
- [ESRC research funding guide](#)
- [Roles in funding applications: eligibility, responsibilities and costings guidance](#)
- [Research organisations eligible for UKRI funding](#)
- [Including project co-leads from business, third sector or government bodies](#)



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Q&A

We will create and publish a FAQ document which will include responses to questions submitted in advance of the webinar.

If you have more questions, please email them to ESRCP2R@esrc.ukri.org.