AHRC Locally Unlocking Culture through Inclusive Access (LUCIA) Programme – Public Engagement Webinar, Technical Briefing Document

Full information about the LUCIA programme can be found on the LUCIA funding opportunity page on the UKRI website. In relation to the following questions, we would also encourage you to consult the frequently asked questions document we published as part of the first LUCIA information webinar held virtually on 10th October 2024.

We are also excited to announce the LUCIA-Local Government Association ECR fellowship as part of the broader LUCIA programme. Full information about the fellowship can be found on the LUCIA-LGA ECR fellowship funding opportunity page on the UKRI website.

For further questions related to both LUCIA funding opportunities, please contact the AHRC Health, Environmental and Urban Humanities (HEUH) Inbox - HEUH@ahrc.ukri.org - and include 'LUCIA' in the subject line of your email for ease. We will respond to your query as soon as possible.

Eligibility

Q: What are the necessary eligibility criteria to apply for this funding opportunity?

A: Full guidance on eligibility criteria for the LUCIA programme can be found in the LUCIA funding opportunity.

If you have any specific eligibility queries, please contact us using the contact information outlined in the 'Contact details' section of the LUCIA funding opportunity.

Q: What is the difference between a project partner and a co-lead? Can a project partner (organisation or individual) be paid with money from the funding for their contribution?

A: A project partner is a third-party collaborating organisation that provides specific contributions either in cash or in-kind, to a project. This may include direct (cash) or indirect (in-kind) contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.

Project co-leads are core team members within the project. Please see the 'Who can apply' section of the LUCIA funding opportunity for full guidance on who can be included as project co-leads for the LUCIA programme.

Project Partners are expected to provide contributions to the delivery of the project and should not therefore be seeking to claim funds from UKRI. However, where there are specific circumstances where Project Partners do require funding for minor costs such as travel and subsistence, this will be paid at 80% full economic cost (FEC) unless otherwise stated by us.

Please note that any applicable Subsidy Control regulation and HMRC guidance will also be taken into account which may affect the percentage of these costs that we will fund. These costs should be outlined and fully justified in an application for this funding opportunity and will be subject to assessment by the LUCIA programme assessment panel.

Q: What is the minimum and maximum of partner organisations? Should we include both community organisations and policy makers? How involved should partners be in the actual writing of the application? Could we partner with university-based organisations at our research organisation?

A: There are no limits on the number of partner organisations that can be involved in LUCIA pilot networks, but you should ensure partnerships within the leadership team are equitable, inclusive and support innovative interdisciplinary approaches.

Project co-leads not based at eligible research organisations must also be included in the leadership team for LUCIA networks, and we would encourage collaboration with community organisations and policymakers as part of leadership teams.

For administrative purposes it is necessary to identify a single project lead who must be affiliated with the lead research organisation. The project lead and their research office will be ultimately responsible for administration of the grant but we would encourage you to work closely with project partners during the application process. Applications should demonstrate equitable co-creation and co-production with community partners and people with expertise by experience, and clearly identify any barriers to access for those participants.

We would encourage collaboration with university-based partners. It is also expected that each network will engage with their research organisation's public engagement team throughout the application process, to ensure that public engagement is prioritised throughout activities planned.

To be clear, the combined costs for UK-based project co-leads not employed by eligible research organisations must be a minimum of 10% of the total FEC of the grant application. If the combined cost for UK project co-leads not based at eligible research organisations is below 10%, you must clearly articulate why and how partners from outside academia are equitably included within the project. The combined cost cannot exceed 30% of the total FEC.

Q: It would be helpful to have greater clarity on the requirement to have a team member who is versed in cities/urban environments research: is this assessed by, e.g., publications in this area, by a record of working with community groups, by involvement in initiatives related to urban environments (which in itself seemed to be very broadly interpreted)?

A: It is expected that at least one member of the leadership team will hold demonstrable experience in research within the cities and urban environments area. AHRC's Cities and Urban Environments portfolio covers a broad range of academic disciplines and is highly interdisciplinary in scope. Specialist areas include:

- Architecture
- Built environment design
- Infrastructure, and the implications for communities
- Urban planning, sustainability and policy design
- Heritage

- Inclusion and representation in urban spaces

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but key to all aspects is how research activity relates to specified communities and working collaboratively with those communities.

For further examples of how AHRC is addressing challenges in this research space, please see our 2022 publication ['Shaping our cities and urban spaces'](#) on the UKRI website.

Q: Can you share examples of good practice in terms of writing the application, and what not to do.

A: Firstly, the project lead is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service for administrative purposes.

We expect all network team members and project partners to contribute to the application. We recognise that there can be challenges in co-ordinating the co-design of a network application, and this can be a time-consuming process, but we strongly encourage project leads to consider approaching both their research office and public engagement colleagues at their research organisations with sufficient time to discuss how to ensure applications can be completed in inclusive, equitable and collaborative ways.

For full guidance on the application process, please see the 'How to Apply' section of the LUCIA funding opportunity on the UKRI Funding Finder. And if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to drop us a line via the HEUH inbox - heuh@ahrc.ukri.org.

We also encourage you to consult the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) for guidance on what to include in your application more broadly and advice on avoiding common application errors.

Q: How do you add as co-lead someone in a community group? The community group is not in the list of organisations [on the UKRI Funding Service]. Do you have to add the community group as an organisation through "Enter new person's organisation name"? Is it OK if this organisation is not incorporated?

A: Core team members, such as project co-leads, should be added by the project lead as they complete the application on the UKRI Funding Service. 'Independent' may be listed within the organisation section for the individual.

Once added, team members will receive an email asking them to confirm their details and complete their equality, diversity and inclusion profile. They will be able to see basic information about the application (including application ID and title, the project lead, their role, application status).

Q: How do you add as co-lead someone that is independent and does not belong to any organisation [on the UKRI Funding Service]? e.g. a campaigner or someone in the cultural sector that collaborates with multiple groups.

A: Core team members, such as project co-leads, should be added by the project lead as they complete the application on the UKRI Funding Service. As with community groups, 'Independent' may be listed within the organisation section for the individual.

Once added, team members will receive an email asking them to confirm their details and complete their equality, diversity and inclusion profile. They will be able to see basic information about the application (including application ID and title, the project lead, their role, application status).

Q: If we add community groups to our network and we want to pay them for their contribution, is it more appropriate to add them as co-leads or as partners?

A: This will depend on the role of the community groups within the network. Community organisations and community researchers are eligible to be included as project co-leads - where justified, the time of these project co-leads can be listed under 'Exceptions' and will be funded at 100% FEC. This should be utilised to ensure equitable representation and remuneration for different partners. 100% FEC 'Exceptions' costs are only for staff time and cannot include estates and indirect costs.

Alternatively, depending on the role of the community groups, they may also be added as project partners. However, in this circumstance, they would be expected to provide contributions to the delivery of the project and should not therefore be seeking to claim funds from UKRI.

Q: Do you have any advice on how to frame including organisations which won't be project partners with core responsibility for project design but will be involved in other ways since this is more appropriate for equitable participation and to enable just listening to communities?

A: Community organisations and community researchers are eligible to be included as project co-leads - where justified, the time of these project co-leads can be listed under 'Exceptions' and will be funded at 100% FEC. This should be utilised to ensure equitable representation and remuneration for different partners. 100% FEC 'Exceptions' costs are only for staff time and cannot include estates and indirect costs.

Alternatively, these organisations may still be listed as project partners, direct contributions are not an essential requirement. Their involvement in the project should be outlined within the letter of support document, to be attached to the application. If you feel that the role of 'project partner' does not fit the organisation's involvement in the project, they can still be mentioned within the application, however, no supporting documents may be attached if they are not listed as a project partner. Additionally, entitlement to the outputs of the project and/or Intellectual Property will be determined between the parties involved.

Q: There is a contradiction in the eligibility criteria. Under "Eligibility as an individual", it says "A project co-lead must meet the same criteria as the project lead". However, the call says that co-leads do not need to be from an eligible research organisation. Could you please clarify?

A: Standard AHRC eligibility criteria will apply to this funding opportunity for UK project co-leads based at eligible research organisations. Please see the AHRC Research Funding Guide for full guidance on eligibility.

However, for Project co-leads not based at eligible research organisations, please follow the criteria within the LUCIA funding opportunity page on the UKRI website.

Q: On the question of resourcing properly, the application details say: "The combined costs for UK-based project co-leads not employed by eligible research organisations must be a minimum of 10% of the total FEC of the grant application. If the combined cost for UK project co-leads not based at eligible research organisations is below 10%, you must clearly articulate why and how partners from outside academia are equitably included within the project. The combined cost cannot exceed 30% of the total FEC." - what is your advice on how to square this 30% maximum with providing equitable funding for community partners?

A: We understand the challenges of having a 30% cap on costings related to project co-leads not based at eligible research organisations. However, as a research funder we are bound to UKRI policies and guidelines around the amount of funding which can be allocated away from research organisations and independent research organisations on a grant. As such, this means that we need to ensure the majority of funding is directed towards research organisations within this programme, and therefore we have needed to implement a 30% cap on funding which can be allocated towards project co-leads not based at eligible research organisations.

We strongly encourage project leads to consider approaching research office and public engagement colleagues at their research organisations to discuss further routes of funding to enable equitable partnerships across LUCIA network teams.

Scope

Q: How many projects will be funded?

A: AHRC will fund up to 5 LUCIA pilot networks to enhance cultural access, co-create design of cultural policy and promote inclusion and integration of marginalised communities. The full economic cost of your network can be up to £100,000 and AHRC will fund 80% of the FEC.

Q: Could you please elaborate the scope of the term 'inclusive access'?

A: By 'inclusive access' we are referring to the aim of the LUCIA programme to empower communities across the UK, and to fund people-centred partnerships which amplify seldom heard voices, which respect diverse cultural identities, and which facilitate creative

expression, in order that innovative solutions can be found to widen community participation in culture and cultural practice.

Q: Please can we have more information as to what the requirements/composition of the 'network' are (and how is this different from a partnership)?

A: By network, we are referring to a broader collaboration that brings together communities, research organisations and policy makers in order to identify, prioritise and develop emerging research and knowledge exchange challenges in this space. This can include pre-existing partnerships and/or the exploration of new partnerships within a broader network structure.

For full information on requirements/composition of LUCIA networks, we would encourage you to engage with the 'Who can apply' section of the LUCIA funding opportunity.

Q: It would be useful to know what kind of roles for artists and artistic research you anticipate in the proposed LUCIA network projects. Is there an openness to experimental approaches to discovery, interdisciplinary etc, or is the fund likely to prioritise well established models in order to meet the particular social aims?

A: There is absolutely an openness to explore experimental and interdisciplinary approaches. The core intention of LUCIA pilots is to build equitable urban partnerships, but we also expect to see meaningful activity around community co-design, cultural policy design and development of innovative research methodologies to widen community participation in culture across the UK. We therefore welcome the participation of artists and artistic research in bringing bold and innovative ideas to both network activities and organisation.

Q: How experimental can the structure and methodology of the project be, and does it need to show evidence of success before starting?

A: We absolutely welcome networks with innovative structures and research methodologies to enhance cultural access within and across communities in the UK, and address urban renewal and economic growth.

Through LUCIA, we want to encourage pilots that are continuations of pre-existing cross-sector partnerships looking to build on their work to achieve the aims of the LUCIA programme. We also welcome the creation and exploration of newly formed networks.

We have deliberately designed the funding opportunity to run until 10th April 2025 to ensure applicants have both the time and space to explore new partnerships and build on those relationships already in place between researchers, cultural and community practitioners, and local, regional and devolved government.

Q: Leadership team - urban expertise: How prescriptive is the requirement that "It is expected that at least one member of the leadership team will hold demonstrable experience in research within the cities and urban environments area"? Would this have to be an urban expert specifically or would team members who experience working with the community we want to work (who overwhelming live in cities) with fulfil this remit?

A: To clarify, we do not seek to be prescriptive at all here, and we certainly see project co-leads from cultural, cultural policy and civic discourse, and other relevant sectors, as crucial to LUCIA networks in bringing their specialisms and expertise to the research. We would also expect to see representation from people with expertise by experience, as part of the leadership team in these applications.

For context, AHRC's Cities and Urban Environments portfolio covers a broad range of academic disciplines and is highly interdisciplinary in scope. Specialist areas include:

- Architecture
- Built environment design
- Infrastructure, and the implications for communities
- Urban planning, sustainability and policy design
- Heritage
- Inclusion and representation in urban spaces

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but key to all aspects is how research activity relates to specified communities and working collaboratively with those communities.

Place/Geographical Location

Q: Are there criteria that areas will need to meet to be counted as urban and eligible for funding?

A: Firstly, we would encourage you to consult the [LUCIA funding opportunity](#) for guidance on eligibility and assessment.

For context, the AHRC Cities and Urban Environments portfolio has a broad definition of urban communities which includes cities and towns, suburban areas, peri-urban areas, coastal and island towns, as well as the relationship between urban and rural communities. This broad definition extends to the LUCIA programme.

We expect to see a clear focus on community within the built environment but, crucially, we do not want to be prescriptive in determining the scope of LUCIA network activities and the places and communities that may be part of each network. Therefore, projects concentrated on local communities outside of cities and distinctly urban areas would still fall within the LUCIA programme scope and will be assessed alongside all other applications by our assessment panel – composed of both academic researchers working in this research space and those who hold expertise by experience.

Q: I have found a Q&A document about the LUCIA programme that discusses the geographical area eligibility. I notice that both urban and rural localities are eligible. Could you please confirm this?

A: Yes, we expect to see a clear focus on community within the built environment but, crucially, we want to avoid being prescriptive in determining the scope of LUCIA network activities, or the places and communities that may be part of each network. Therefore, market towns or urban areas in rural counties across the UK would be in scope for network activities, as would research into the relationship between urban and rural contexts.

Q: Are you open to applications from London based networks, or is there an expectation that they would have a regional component to them?

A: Yes, we are open to applications from London-based communities and networks. LUCIA is intended to offer a coordinated UK-wide investment, with a spread of collaborative networks funded across locations, disciplines, community groups, and diverse approaches to research.

We would like to see a spread of networks across the UK, but, ultimately, the assessment panel will be empowered to recommend the strongest overall portfolio of proposals that they determine will provide the greatest added value. A sub-panel may be convened to consider the applications deemed fundable by the assessment panel and may decide on the final portfolio of applications to be funded.

Q: Within the year long time frame, would it be acceptable to have multiple projects in different locations to test out different approaches?

A: We encourage applicants to think collaboratively about the partnerships for each LUCIA network pilot and this can include thinking across different communities, places, and regions. We would expect to see justification around location choice for multiple projects, and the feasibility of working within and/or across the places or regions specified needs to be carefully considered.

Q: Network scale: To what extent is scale/geography a consideration in the network? This could be a rich/deep but highly localised network around a particular area, e.g. regeneration, major development site, or is the expectation that a network needs to be wider? A local network may also have commonalities with other place-based scenarios, e.g. around new cultural developments, re-use of heritage sites etc. and the local network might join with other areas and projects both in the UK and internationally to produce a wider overall network. Is the more distributed network likely to be seen as a strength?

A: We encourage applicants to think collaboratively about the partnerships for each LUCIA network pilot and this can include thinking across different communities, places, and regions.

We would expect to see justification around location choice, the feasibility of working within the place or region specified needs to be carefully considered.

We would like to see a spread of networks across the UK, but, ultimately, the assessment panel will be empowered to recommend the strongest overall portfolio of proposals that they determine will provide the greatest added value.

Outcomes and Expectations

Q: It would be great if you could say more about the kinds of possible outcomes you are looking for as part of the LUCIA programme.

A: The core intention of LUCIA pilots is to build equitable urban partnerships as part of your network primarily, but we also expect to see meaningful activity around, as already mentioned, areas such as community co-design, cultural policy design and development of innovative research methodologies to enhance cultural access.

It's worth bearing in mind that this programme is a pilot for a broader strategic area. The AHRC is well placed here with other investments including our Creative Communities and Place programmes, as well as our Mobilising Community Assets programme, which already have significant outputs. We're really looking for additionality of outcomes and how your network would add value to this well-established area. We'd like to see cultural policy design, with a greater emphasis on actively standing collaborations to drive the strategic agenda forward.

Q: How is the quality of artistic outcomes measured as part of LUCIA?

A: Applicants will be expected to fully outline the anticipated outcomes (artistic or otherwise) of the network activities in their proposals, and these will be assessed by the LUCIA programme assessment panel. The assessment panel will be comprised of academics working in relevant research fields, and also local and regional policy and community practitioners with expertise by experience.

Q: What makes for a great working package under the LUCIA programme?

A: Through the LUCIA programme, we are looking to support inclusive, equitable and interdisciplinary research networks that build upon existing local and regional knowledge and co-create collaborative models with communities to address challenges to widening cultural access.

It's also worth bearing in mind that this programme is a pilot for a broader strategic area. The AHRC is well placed here with other investments including our Creative Communities and Place programmes, as well as our Mobilising Community Assets programme, which already have significant outputs. We're really looking for additionality of outcomes and how your network would add value to this well-established area. We'd like to see cultural policy design, with a greater emphasis on actively standing collaborations to drive the strategic agenda forward.

Full information on the aims of the programme and what we will fund can be found in the LUCIA funding opportunity.

Q: What are the key differences in adapting the proposal application made for the LUCIA Notification of Intent stage in December into the final application in time for April?

A: The Notification of Intent (NoI) stage which closed in December was an optional stage of the LUCIA application process enabling AHRC to convene an assessment panel with relevant expertise. The NoI was designed to be an initial indication of themes of interest and we will expect full applications to hold far greater detail in line with the 'How to apply' section of the LUCIA funding opportunity.

Q: Collection of evaluation data (asked for clarification)

A: We would encourage project leads to work closely and collaboratively with their research office and colleagues from proposed project leadership teams in the development of LUCIA network activities such as collection of evaluation data.

If you have any further questions on evaluation, please do contact please contact the AHRC Health, Environmental and Urban Humanities (HEUH) Inbox - HEUH@ahrc.ukri.org - and include 'LUCIA' in the subject line of your email for ease. We will respond to your query as soon as possible.

Q: Are you able to provide any guidance or reading recommendations about how to shape appropriate governance structures for academic-community partnerships, especially for those of us who are new to this?

A: We would encourage you to look at the LUCIA workshop report, published to reflect discussions we held with community groups, researchers and policymakers in March and April to help further scope, co-design and build the LUCIA programme. In particular, please see Appendix A (page 9) which outlines some of the scoping activities we have undertaken and the and the lessons learnt from exciting funding opportunities, past, present and further afield.

We also strongly encourage project leads to consider approaching public engagement colleagues at their research organisations to discuss appropriate and responsible governance structures for academic/community partnerships.

Q: Conflicts of interests: Many of us are part of the communities we research with. How can we address conflicts of interests?

A: For full guidance on conflicts of interest, please see the UKRI Conflicts of Interest policy.

We would anticipate that research organisations would have guidelines around participatory research, and therefore would encourage applicants to consider these when making plans as part of LUCIA network applications and consult both their research office and public engagement colleagues at their research organisations with sufficient time to discuss how to ensure applications can be completed in inclusive, equitable and collaborative ways.

It will be inevitable that a certain degree of cross-over will happen through the range of communities LUCIA networks may engage with, but we anticipate that this can be acknowledged within LUCIA network applications.

Q: A year is quite short in work that actively involves communities in making change. After the year funding – is there an idea that the network applies for further funding to develop / consolidate outputs?

A: The LUCIA networks are pilot networks, and we really hope to be able to amplify the programme in future, though this will be contingent on securing future funding. We'd really hope therefore that any network activities within this year are able to stand alone in terms of value to the community.

It is also envisaged that applications show routes to sustainability, with full appreciation that we hope to be able to offer further funding in this research space. In case we're not able to continue this funding, we would hope to see responsible attempts to ensure that relationships are sustainable at the end of the networks. This will potentially involve working closely alongside research offices and public engagement teams within research organisations to ascertain further funding/facilitation options.

Q: Can you explain a bit more about the assessment process/panel for this funding and how equity priorities fits into that?

If your application meets all UKRI criteria for assessment, we will invite academic experts and experts by experience, to assess the quality of your application within an assessment panel. The panel members will rank it alongside other applications, after which the panel will make a funding recommendation. Expert by experience panellists will receive additional support and guidance from AHRC about how to complete their assessment.

Equitable co-creation and practice are key aspects of how applications will be assessed and we would encourage you to consider carefully the 'How to apply' and 'How we will assess your application' sections of the LUCIA funding opportunity page which outline assessment areas for the programme.

Future

Q: Are you able to submit a final application if you have not already submitted a Notification of Intent?

A: To confirm, the Notification of Intent (NoI) was an optional stage and you can still apply for this funding opportunity if you have not submitted a NoI as it will not form part of the assessment of final applications.

Q: For those of us who submitted a Notification of Intent, are we still going to receive any feedback on our submissions?

A: Yes, we will be sending out feedback on the NoI submissions. Due to the high number of submissions received, we're not able to provide feedback specific to each NoI response.

Q: Will LUCIA be offered in subsequent years / funding cycles?

We really hope we can be in a position to offer further funding for a wider network plus programme in future, however, we can't guarantee further funding in this space at this moment in time.

We also produce a quarterly AHRC Cities and Urban Environments newsletter which provides updates on LUCIA and other upcoming funding opportunities in this research space. Please do let us know if you would like to be added to our mailing list for this newsletter by contacting the HEUH Inbox - HEUH@ahrc.ukri.org - and include 'Cities and Urban Environments Newsletter' in the subject line of your email for ease. We will respond to your query as soon as possible.