



ESRC IAA/Wales DTP National Productivity Investment Fund Accelerating Business Collaborations Funding.

Covid-19 related Projects

Deadline: 05th March 2021

Summary

The ESRC Wales DTP and Cardiff University have been allocated £100,000 by the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) **to expand opportunities and build the capability and capacity of social science doctoral students and early career researchers to engage and collaborate with business.**

To achieve this, ESRC IAA Account and the ESRC Wales Doctoral Training Partnership are collaborating together to deliver activities that include, but are not limited to:

- a) Brokering and supporting collaborations with businesses for social science doctoral students and ECRs, including through identifying opportunities for placements, collaborative studentships and other mechanisms to deliver high quality social science insights that address business challenges.
- b) Developing early career social science researcher skills for working with business, including through entrepreneurship training, workshops and other skills-focused activity.

Funding Call

In order to achieve the above objectives, we are calling for proposals for projects that are already engaged in **Covid related research** and are looking to **apply their research within the private sector specifically with businesses**. Projects will also seek to:

- a) build relationships with businesses to generate future collaboration;
- b) provide opportunities for ECRs and Doctoral researchers to spend time at a business or for business staff to spend time at the University in order to understand each other's needs;
- c) involve PhD students and/or ECRs in the entire project to build their skills and understanding of business needs.

There are two strands under which applications can be made:

- **Business insight funding**
 - Up to £3k
 - For pilot/exploratory and scoping of new collaborations with business
- **Business Accelerator funding**
 - Up to £10k
 - For exchanges/ placements within industry to further develop deeper partnerships.

Eligibility

The scheme can support any social science doctoral researcher or ECR within any of the institutions covered by the Wales DTP, regardless of whether ESRC is funding their main training or studies. Applications must be based on research that is predominantly social science.

Doctoral students and ECRs must be the main beneficiaries of all activities supported. Applicants can collaborate with any business from any sector, including social enterprise, though the funding cannot be used to support activities where the primary focus is on public or third sector organisations. The focus of activity should be on supporting direct collaboration with business, though can include engagement with intermediary or representative organisations such as trade bodies or associations. Examples of previously funded collaborations include:

- Involving ECRs in scoping activities for Cyber Psychology and Human Factors within the Aviation industry.
- Researchers working with a group of SME businesses producing organic vegetables, around a shared need to enhance their data collection and management.
- Collaborating with a construction company to investigate and develop policy on Culture and Behaviour in the Construction Industry.
- Researchers building and deepening relations within the Transport industry.

Definition of a business

- For the purposes of this funding, we define “business” to be any organisation which is run for the basis of making a profit. We also specifically include **trade associations**, **business associations** and **sector organisations** which represent businesses.
- This definition includes **social enterprises**, which are run both for a social mission and for the basis of making a profit.
- This definition excludes charitable organisations, except where these organisations have separate commercial subsidiaries/legal entities which are run for the basis of making a profit.

- This definition excludes public sector organisations. However, grant holders may work with **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** where this aligns with the principle of working with and supporting businesses.

Academic Eligibility

Applications must involve at least one Doctoral researcher or one ECR. Collaborations across the six institutions is also encouraged. Applicants are also reminded to liaise with their Institutional Translation teams to help develop the application.

PhD Student Eligibility

All Doctoral researchers and Post-doctoral fellows from any of the institutions within the Wales ESRC DTP are eligible. This also includes those that are not directly funded by ESRC. Applicants are encouraged to liaise with their supervisors, who will need to be the lead investigator on the application and also with their Institutional Translation teams to help develop the application.

Applying for and delivering NPIF ABC activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Applications addressing and mitigating the health, social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak are actively invited.

Applicants need to be mindful that travel and border restrictions, social distancing measures, limited access to facilities and potential renewed outbreaks and their containment measures will continue to significantly impact the delivery of collaborations.

Applicants are therefore strongly advised to consider forms of delivery for their projects that mitigate, as far as possible, for COVID-19 related restrictions. Whether through limiting travel, or virtual means of collaboration, applicants need to clearly demonstrate in their proposals the feasibility of their project plans in the current circumstances.

Application Process

Call for proposals: The call is now open and applicants are asked to fill in the application form and submit to esrciaa@cardiff.ac.uk by no later than **12pm on Friday 5th march 2021**. Projects are anticipated to start no later than the 01st April 2021 and to end no later than the **31st August 2021**.

Exclusions

- **Research projects**
- **Indirect Costs, Estate Costs and Directly Allocated (DA) costs** from the CAP form.
This would include permanent staff time.
- **Large capital items of equipment** are not eligible for support from the IAA. Purchase of smaller items of equipment may be eligible, but any case for support will require strong justification why the equipment is needed to deliver impact.
- IAA funds cannot be used to support **costs associated with protection of intellectual property or with Knowledge Transfer Partnerships**.

Application review process

- A supporting statement will be added to all applications by a representative from the translational team within each respective institution, summarising the project's strengths and weaknesses. They may also add information missing from an application that the applicant has disclosed in developmental conversations.
- To review applications, we will use blind reviewing and names of applicants together (where possible) with any other identifying information will be removed prior to sending applications to reviewers. When writing your application **please write in third person and aim to avoid the use of any identifying language and information where possible.**
- Each application will be reviewed by two representatives from the funding panel which comprises academic peers and senior external stakeholders. The Panel Chair will look at all the applications
- Each proposal will be assessed against six criteria
 - Section A: Does the proposal make a strong case for achieving the aims of the funding? (4 marks)
 - Section B: How well explained are the potential opportunities for the researchers and the business involved? (4 marks)
 - Section C: Are the outputs and outcomes realistic? (4 marks)
 - Section D: Is the project management section realistic and does it provide assurances that any risks associated with the project have been mitigated? (4 marks)
 - Section E: Is it value for money? Is the allocation of money justified? (4 marks)
- The Panel will meet to discuss the scored applications, and funding recommendations will be made to the Chair of the Panel who will make the final funding decision. The outcomes will then be communicated to applicants.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Cardiff University is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect. The institution aims to embrace diversity in all of its activities and proudly acknowledges that variety and difference are intrinsic to the wellbeing and future development of the University.

Reporting requirements

To meet ESRC's requirements, all projects will be asked to provide the following information, which will be collected either at application or report stage:

- Academic and non-academic organisations involved
- Project aims and objectives
- Cash and In-kind contributions from partners
- Outputs and outcomes achieved during the project

- Outputs and outcomes achieved after the project (as part of our standard annual follow up to IAA funded projects)
- Additional funding applied for (GCRF and other) (as part of our standard annual follow up to IAA funded projects)

You may be asked for further information if we receive additional requests from ESRC.

Timelines

January 2021	Announcement of new funding call
5 th March 2021	Closing date
April 2021	Projects start

Further information

For further information on the NPIF ABC funding and copies of the application form, please contact the Impact Manager in Research and Innovation Services at Cardiff University (Email: esrciaa@cardiff.ac.uk Telephone: x10520).

ESRC Impact Acceleration Account NPIF ABC FAQs

Social Science

What is covered by the ESRC definition of social science?

Visit www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/applicants/proposal-classifications-ESRC-disciplines.aspx for further information about what the ESRC defines as social science.

It may also help to consult ESRC & AHRC's statement on subject coverage:

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/policy/interfaces-between-the-arts-and-humanities-and-the-social-sciences/>

How do I know that my project is within the description of social sciences?

See the above information. If you have a query about your specific project, contact Lillian Matovu, Impact manager (Email: MatovuL1@cardiff.ac.uk, Telephone: x10520), in the first instance.

Does the project need to have been supported by the ESRC previously?

Not at all – in fact the ESRC are keen to fund impact from social science research which has not been funded through them.

Are staff with ESRC funded research projects eligible to apply?

In the main, yes, though ESRC have been clear to reiterate that the funding is not intended as a follow-on funding for projects which should have had adequately costed the impact element of their grant through the 'Pathways to Impact' section of their funding application, which remains the primary way in which the ESRC want to fund impact generation.

If you are affiliated to an ESRC-funded centre, please discuss your eligibility with the Impact Manager in the first instance.

[Is the funding open to all Colleges within the DTP institutions?](#)

Yes, to all areas of the [institutions](#) as long as the underpinning research falls within the ESRC definition of social science (see above).

[Who can apply?](#)

Researchers and doctoral researchers at all the Wales DTP Institutions, both full- and part-time, and from any career stage can apply as long as the underpinning research is social science and they have the time to commit to ensuring their project is a success. For Research Associate postholders, this means that the funder of your post will need to be content for you to manage a grant if successful. Doctoral researchers will need to apply with their supervisor or another researcher who will be allocated the role of lead investigator of the project. We advise that you liaise with your supervisor regarding the best route of action. If you are an international member of staff, you will need to check that this work does not affect the terms of your visa.

[Finances](#)

[Do I need to secure match funding?](#)

Match funding is not absolutely necessary, although the panel will consider level of funding from Schools and external partners when considering applications. The ESRC like to see their investment leveraging funds from other sources, so this will be a part of the assessment process. Particularly for projects which operate with commercial partners, the panel will want to see an indication of matched funding.

[What is eligible as matched/in kind contributions?](#)

Direct contributions to the project will be considered as matched funding. Any other contributions by partners (staff-time, venues, office space, travel etc) can be considered as in-kind contributions.

[As a member of permanent staff, can I spend the money on staff time?](#)

Directly incurred staff costs are eligible for support. Indirect and estates costs are not eligible and should be met by the PI's School. Academic PI supervision costs **should not** be costed into bids, either as direct costs or matched funds.

[Can I buy large equipment?](#)

No, large equipment is ineligible. Small equipment may be eligible as long as a well-reasoned justification is provided and that it will be used to generate the impact.

[Can any non-academic collaborators receive funding?](#)

Applications can include costs for reimbursing non-academic collaborators if they are contributing a specific service. Partners **may not** be reimbursed simply for participating in the project. Assessing the commitment of partners to your project is key to gauging the likelihood of them implementing impact, and some projects where partners demand reimbursement may falter once the funding runs out. Contact the Impact Manager for clarification.

[Can the funds pay for publication costs?](#)

The funds will not pay for the publication of research. The funds may cover the cost of presenting research findings in a format that will be particularly accessible to a target audience (e.g.

policymakers) but a well-reasoned plan of how you will ensure they make use of the publication will also be required to avoid ‘shelf-warming’.

[Who will hold the budget?](#)

The School to which the main applicant belongs will hold the budget, and any money you receive will count as research income for the School.

[Who will do the financial transactions for me?](#)

It is anticipated that your School or departmental administrators will handle the transactions for you, at your direction.

[Can I use the funds for international partners or international travel?](#)

If you intend to generate impact on an international scale, it may be possible to justify funding for international partners and travel, providing the partners have shown commitment to the research/project in question.

[Will it help if I have partners that want to put funds into the bid?](#)

Matched funding from partners is always a good sign of partner commitment and will be considered in the application form along with the other information requested. This can either be in kind or in cash.

[How long will the funding last for?](#)

It is anticipated that projects funded through the NPIF ABC Fund will start on 1 April 2021 and end by 31 August 2021. All funding has to have been spent by this date as this is a deadline set by ESRC.

[What authorisations do I need?](#)

In the first instance, academics are recommended to discuss proposals with their School’s Director of Research. They will also need to obtain their Head of School’s approval for the project via a CAP form prior to submission.

For Doctoral researchers, we recommend that you discuss your proposal with your supervisor, who may put themselves forward as the lead investigator on the project or will be able to approve an alternative.

[Will I need to do a Cost and Approval \(CAP\) form for the project?](#)

Yes, every full proposal will require a CAP form prior to submission to the panel, and this will need to be submitted to the Impact Manager on or before the deadline day with Head of School approval.

We advise that you liaise with your respective translational teams or research managers within your institutions to get this approved.

[I’m on a part-time contract. Can I use the funding to work longer hours?](#)

No, the funding is not intended to supplement staff costs which should be met by the School.

[Can other universities be considered ‘external partners’?](#)

No: by ‘external partner’ or ‘partner organisations’ we mean non-academic organisations.

[Timescales](#)

[How long will it take for my application to be assessed?](#)

- 05 March 2021 – closing date for applications

- 1 April 2021 – Projects start
- 31 August 2021 – all projects must have finished and spent their funds to meet ESRC requirements.

How quickly can I/do I need to start the project?

Funds should be set up within a few weeks of the funding decision, so projects should be able to start promptly.

Business projects

Is collaboration with external organisations/groups mandatory?

For this funding you must have a business partner.

What counts as a business?

For the purposes of this funding stream only, we will not be supporting a project where the only partners are charities, public sector organisations or third sector organisations. The focus will be on organisations that exist to generate profit for shareholders/owners/partners or those like John Lewis/Welsh Water that provide a business service but re-invest any surplus to staff or customers.

- For the purposes of this funding, we define “business” to be any organisation which is run for the basis of making a profit. We also specifically include **trade associations**, **business associations** and **sector organisations** which represent businesses.
- This definition includes **social enterprises**, which are run both for a social mission and for the basis of making a profit.
- This definition excludes charitable organisations, except where these organisations have separate commercial subsidiaries/legal entities which are run for the basis of making a profit.
- This definition excludes public sector organisations. However, grant holders may work with **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** where this aligns with the principle of working with and supporting businesses.

Can I use the money to fund a research project?

No, research projects are ineligible.

Can I support a project that is already happening?

The funding is not intended to supplement shortfalls in under-funded projects. However, if a justifiable case can be made as to why the funding is for additional activity, it may be eligible.

Can I ask for more than one project?

Yes, there is no limit on the number of projects one staff member may submit/be involved in, though quality will be the key overriding criterion.

Applications

Will I be provided with feedback on my application?

Applicants are encouraged to consult their institutional Translation teams during the development of their proposal who will provide constructive feedback and support the development of the final application.

Once you have submitted a proposal, all applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, will be provided with constructive feedback comprising the panel's decision, their reasoning, and considerations for improvement if needed.

What kind of end of project report will I need to provide?

All successful applicants will be required to complete an end of project report which will comprise both a narrative document and quantitative data to illustrate the success or otherwise of the project. This final report should be thorough, but not onerous.

What if I don't complete the project?

If projects are unsuccessful for whatever reason, a report will be requested to examine reasons for non-completion and to highlight issues and risks which can be raised to and considered by the Impact Advisory Board and feed into how the University plans for impact activity in the future.

Am I more likely to be successful if I ask for less?

The panel will be aware that only a finite amount of funding is available and will be unlikely to fund large numbers of very expensive projects. Applications with well-reasoned justifications for the funding requested will be considered on their merits, and value for money is part of the assessment process.

Applicants are encouraged to consider how they might achieve their project aims with a smaller demand on resources.

What are the criteria you will be using to assess applications?

See the funding guidelines which have more details on criteria.

Will I do better if my project is interdisciplinary or cross-school?

Interdisciplinary and cross-School projects are very welcome, though there will be no specific bias towards these projects with the exception of events and symposia which require participation from more than one research group.

How quickly will I know that I am successful or not?

Within a fortnight.

Who can I contact to ask about the proposal?

Please contact Lillian Matovu, ESRC Impact manager (Email: MatovuL1@cardiff.ac.uk Telephone: x10520), in the first instance to discuss your proposal.

Will I get a reduction in teaching/admin to do the project?

Any reduction in teaching and admin will be between the applicant and their employing School/department.

Now that DTPs are also supporting post-docs through ESRC fellowships, can the funding benefit post-docs within the DTPs or is it restricted to PGRs (PhD students)?

Postdoctoral fellows are research staff and therefore covered by the funding available those institutions within the DTP. We appreciate that a number of the ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowships may be allocated to partners within DTP institutions that don't have IAAs and as such would consider proposals to include them.

Further information:

For further information or queries please contact Lillian Matovu, Impact Manager (Email: MatovuL1@cardiff.ac.uk Telephone: x10520).