Quick Reference

Please note that you must read the full Call document for guidance before submitting your proposal

Digital Economy Investigator-led Research Projects

Call type: Invitation for proposals

Closing date: 16:00 on 12 September 2018

Funding Available: Up to £5.0m is available to support around ten awards.

How to apply: Full proposals.

Assessment Process: Full proposals will undergo postal peer review followed by a prioritisation panel (if reviews are sufficiently supportive), resulting in a rank ordered list.

Key Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for Full Proposals</td>
<td>12 September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritisation Panel</td>
<td>Mid-February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding decision</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional information: Please note the requirements in the Eligibility section below.

Contacts:

- Jason Morgan – jason.morgan@epsrc.ukri.org, 01793 444117
- Miriam Dowle – miriam.dowle@epsrc.ukri.org, 01793 444321
**Digital Economy Investigator-led Research Projects**

**Call type:** Invitation for proposals

**Closing date:** 16:00 on 12 September 2018

**Related themes:** Digital Economy, Engineering, Healthcare Technologies, ICT, Manufacturing the Future

**Summary**

Funding of up to £5 million is available from the Digital Economy (DE) Theme to support around 10 awards for adventurous investigator-led research projects to explore any area of digital economy research. Projects may be of any length but are envisioned to last typically 18-36 months. Proposals may align with the current DE Theme priority areas, or make a case for a unique research agenda. We encourage applicants to be creative in their ways of working and the involvement of different groups of individuals and organisations. We encourage applicants to be adventurous and ambitious in creating their proposals, incorporating a balanced consideration of potential risks and outcomes.

The call will involve a full proposal stage, with proposals assessed via postal peer review followed by a prioritisation panel (subject to sufficiently supportive reviewer feedback).

The proposed research is required to be at least 50% within EPSRC remit.

[https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/remit/](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/remit/)

**Background**

The DE Theme seeks to rapidly realise the transformational impact of digital technologies on aspects of community life, cultural experiences, future society, and the economy. It seeks to bring together researchers in ICT, mathematical science, engineering, social sciences, economics, arts and humanities with stakeholders in different application domains to create digital technologies, platforms and solutions that are design with and for users of the digital technology. There are four current DE priority areas, scoped via a community workshop in 2014:

- Trust, identity, privacy and security
- Digital business models
- The internet of things for a service economy
- Content creation and consumption
The priority areas reflect the broad relevance and remit of DE research, and have formed the basis for the majority of recent DE Theme funding, mainly via strategically managed calls despite the availability of open standard mode funding.

For more information on the DE Theme mission, priorities, funding and investments, see our website: https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/themes/digitaleconomy/


Aims and Scope

Recognising feedback from sources such as the DE Theme’s Programme Advisory Board, as well as the diverse expertise, innovative approaches and broad vision of the DE community, we aim to encourage investigator-led research projects across the digital economy space, where the topic and approach for the research is determined by the DE community themselves. Whilst the EPSRC’s open standard mode route to funding is available for this type of project, we do not receive significant numbers of high quality DE proposals via this route.

Proposals submitted through this call must incorporate the following points:

- Proposals should identify and address nationally-important real-world research problems in the digital economy. Proposals may align with the DE Theme priority areas, or make a case for a unique research agenda. Consideration should also be given to the EPSRC Delivery Plan and Prosperity outcomes [https://epsrc.ukri.org/about/plans/deliveryplan/sciencestrategy/].

- Proposals should be co-created by interdisciplinary research teams, in which collaborations are synergistic (addressing problems that could not otherwise be addressed via independent disciplinary approaches) and symbiotic (engaging, enriching and enhancing the capabilities and expertise of all contributors). We encourage applicants to be creative in their ways of working and the involvement of different groups of individuals and organisations.

- Applicants should engage with research users in the conception and implementation of the proposed projects (such as industrial partners, charities and third sector organisations).

- The research proposed should take an approach and generate outcomes aligned with the EPSRC’s Framework for Responsible Innovation. Furthermore, the work should have impact beyond the lifetime of the research project and deliver technology that is sustainable.

We wish to encourage applications that are adventurous and ambitious, in which the balance of risk against potential outcomes has been carefully considered.

Proposals that do not have the majority of their research with EPSRC’s remit will be rejected.
For more information about EPSRC’s portfolio and strategies, see our website: https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/

For more information about EPSRC’s remit: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/remit/

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
The long term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent and the Research Councils have together developed the ambitious RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

In line with the UKRI Diversity Principles, EPSRC expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice. We are committed to supporting the research community in the diverse ways a research career can be built with our investments. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcomes applications from academics who job share, have a part-time contract, need flexible working arrangements or those currently committed to other longer, large existing grants. Please see our Equality and Diversity webpages at https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/equalitydiversity/ for further information.

Equipment
Equipment over £10,000 in value (inc. VAT) is not available through this call. Smaller items of equipment (individually under £10,000) should be in the Directly Incurred - Other Costs heading.

For more information on equipment funding, please see: https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/

Eligibility
To encourage full and committed engagement in the proposed work, applicants must ensure that:

- Any single investigator appears on only one proposal, either as a principle investigator or co-investigator

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/

A list of eligible organisations to apply to EPSRC is provided at: https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/

How to apply

Submitting an application
You should prepare and submit your proposal using the Research Councils’ Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/).
When adding a new proposal, you should select:

- Council ‘EPSRC’
- Document type ‘Standard Proposal’
- Scheme ‘Standard’
- On the Project Details page you should select the ‘Digital Economy Investigator-led Research Projects’ call.

Note that clicking ‘submit document’ on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation’s administration, not to EPSRC. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation’s submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date. EPSRC must receive your application by **16:00 on 12 September 2018**.

Guidance on the types of support that may be sought and advice on the completion of the research proposal forms are given on the EPSRC website ([https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/)) which should be consulted when preparing all proposals.

**Guidance on writing an application**

Applications must be made through Je-S. As well as the Je-S form, the following documents should be submitted:

- **Case for Support**: should be up to eight pages in total, to include:
  - Two-page track record, which should detail the relevant expertise that each investigator will bring to the research
  - Six-page description of the proposed research focus and how this fits the aim and scope of the call. Please see the ‘Assessment criteria’. This should include a clear statement of the proposal’s vision, and how each strand of activity complements this vision.

- **Pathways to Impact**: should be up to two pages and is primarily for detailing the activities which will help develop potential economic and societal impacts. Please detail how the proposed research project will be managed to engage beneficiaries and increase the likelihood of impacts. More information on preparing the impact plan and on impact can be found on the EPSRC website at: [https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/impactguidance/](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/impactguidance/)

- **Justification of resources**: should be up to two pages. This should be a narrative description of the need for the resources requested.

- **Work plan**: should be up to one page. It is not expected that this will be a Gantt chart for the whole time of the project, but should include a comprehensive plan for the start of the project and then refer to the management strategy to give appropriate milestones for when important decisions on the direction of the research will be taken. For advice on writing proposals see: [https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/)
Applicants should use the Ethical Information section on the Je-S form to demonstrate to peer reviewers that they have fully considered any ethical issues concerning the material they intend to use, the nature and choice, current public perceptions and attitudes towards the subject matter or research area. EPSRC will not fund a project if it believes that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for. All relevant parts of the Ethical Information section must be completed. If the research will involve human participation or the use of animals covered by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 it is recommended that applicants pay particular attention to the guidance highlighted below. EPSRC reserves the right to reject applications prior to peer review if the Ethical Information sections are not completed correctly.


Please note that on submission to EPSRC all non-PDF documents uploaded onto Je-S are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

For advice on writing proposals see:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/

Assessment

Assessment process

Assessment of proposals will take the form of a 2 stage process: (1) postal peer review and (2) prioritisation panel.

Stage 1: Postal peer review

Proposals will be reviewed via standard postal peer review. If a proposal received sufficiently supportive reviewers’ comments it will go forward to stage 2 of the assessment process.

Please find more information about this standard assessment process here https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/assessmentprocess/overview/.

Stage 2: Prioritisation Panel

If the reviewers are sufficiently supportive, the proposal will be assessed and ranked by a panel based on the reviewers’ comments and the applicant response, using the assessment criteria provided below. The panel will consist of cross-disciplinary researchers and will include relevant experts and users from across the digital economy area.

Assessment criteria

The following assessment criteria will be used to assess proposals submitted to this call.
• **Fit to call:**
  o Addresses a nationally-important real-world societally-relevant research problem in the digital economy, making a clear case within or outside the DE Theme priority areas
  o Interdisciplinary proposal that can show evidence of being co-created, capable of addressing research problems that cannot be solved by individual disciplinary approaches, and providing real insight and advancement across the research fields involved
  o Considered, embedded and appropriate engagement of potential research users in the conception and implementation of the research project.
  o Responsible and sustainable project
  o Adventurous and ambitious project.

• **Quality of research, including:**
  o Novelty and timeliness
  o Appropriateness of proposed methodology

• **National importance:**
  o New activity that adds to recent investments in the area
  o Responsible innovation has been considered and explored, and a plan for how it will be continually monitored has been provided

• **Pathways to impact:**
  o Relevance and appropriateness of any beneficiaries or collaborators, evidence that the proposal has been co-created and developed in partnership to deliver maximum impact.
  o Plans for dissemination and knowledge exchange.
  o Appropriate resources have been requested to support responsible innovation, public engagement and networking (including making links with relevant and appropriate Network Pluses supported by the DE Theme or others)

• **Ability of applicant team to deliver the research, including:**
  o Track record of the team
  o Balance of skills of the project team and integration of different methodologies and approaches, to ensure the research challenge is tackled holistically
  o Demonstration of a culture of co-creation, with commitment from all partners to engage with each other throughout the research programme

• **Resources and management, including:**
Effectiveness of planning and resource management strategy
o Appropriateness of resources requested

Feedback
Feedback will consist of reviewer’s reports and, if they are sufficiently supportive, the ranking position at the prioritisation panel. The prioritisation panel may provide specific feedback if deemed necessary, but this will not be given as standard.

Guidance for reviewers
Information about the EPSRC peer review process and guidance for reviewers can be found at: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/assessmentprocess/review/

Guidance for reviewing standard grants can be found here:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/assessmentprocess/review/formsandguidancenotes/standardgrants/

Moving forward
Submissions to this call will count towards the Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Further information about the policy can be found at: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/basics/resubpol/rua/

Key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call published</td>
<td>19 June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call opens on Je-S</td>
<td>19 June 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for Full Proposals</td>
<td>12 September 2018</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mid-February 2019</td>
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<tr>
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<td>March 2019</td>
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</table>

*EPSRC aims to adhere to the key dates as published, however there may be exceptions where the sift, prioritisation or interview meeting may have to change due to panel member availability.

Contacts
For specific advice about the call, please contact:

- Jason Morgan – Portfolio Manager, Digital Economy Theme
  (jason.morgan@epsrc.ukri.org, 01793 444117)
- Miriam Dowle – Senior Portfolio Manager, Digital Economy Theme
  (Miriam.dowle@epsrc.ukri.org, 01793 444321)
Your research administration should be able to offer advice about costing your proposal and the Je-S system.

If there are any queries related to Je-S, please contact the Je-S helpdesk: Je-SHelp@rcuk.ac.uk or 01793 444164.

Please allow enough time before the closing date for your organisation’s submission process.

**Change log**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<td>Jason Morgan</td>
<td>8th June 2018</td>
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**Je-S attachments Check List**

**Standard:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attachment Type</th>
<th>Maximum Page length</th>
<th>Mandatory/Optional</th>
<th>Extra Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case for Support</td>
<td>8 pages</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Comprising up to two A4 sides for a track record, and six A4 sides describing proposed research and its context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways to Impact</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplan</td>
<td>1 page</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Justification for Resources</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVs</td>
<td>2 pages each</td>
<td>As Required by EPSRC</td>
<td>For named and visiting researchers, and researcher co-investigators only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Partner Letters of Support</td>
<td>No page limits</td>
<td>As Required by EPSRC</td>
<td>Must be included from all named project partners. Must be on headed paper, and be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No page limits</td>
<td>As Required by EPSRC</td>
<td>In exceptional circumstances a maximum of three letters can be submitted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Support</td>
<td>No page limits</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>The cover letter can be used to highlight any important information to EPSRC. This attachment type is not seen by reviewers or panel members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please ensure you adhere to the above attachment requirements when submitting your proposal. Any missing, over length or unnecessary attachments may result in your proposal being rejected.