

UK Research and Innovation

Quick Reference

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

UKRI Call: Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research Coordinator

Call type: Invitation for proposals

Closing date: 16:00 19 November 2019

Funding Available: Up to £150,000 for one successful grant for up to 11 months at this stage, leading to a second stage with a single proposal submission **for an Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub**, with up to £3.3m available.

Note that there is a concurrent call for Circular Economy Centres– we recommend that potential applicants read both call documents to familiarise themselves with the scope and format of the overall programme.

How to apply: This is the first of a two stage process. The available funding at this first stage is to fund a Coordinator to lead the scoping and development of a proposal for a Circular Economy Hub. **At this first stage**, applicants must:

- Submit a Notification of Intent to Submit by 16.00 on 31 October 2019 via the form on the call page, and;
- Submit a full proposal by 16.00 on 19 November 2019 via Je-S.

The successful applicant will then be invited to the second stage: writing and submitting a proposal for an Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub. Further details of the Hub proposal will follow in a subsequent call document.

Assessment Process: At this first stage, proposals will be assessed via an independent interview panel. One applicant will be invited to be the Coordinator.

Key Dates:

Activity	Date
Information webinar	17 October, 11.00; 22 October, 13.30
Intent to submit deadline	31 October 2019, 16.00
Call closes	19 November 2019, 16.00
Interview panel	14 January 2020
Decisions to applicants	w/c 20 January 2020

Latest grant start date	17 February 2020
Hub full proposal submission deadline	01 July 2020
Grant end date (note: upon successful award of Hub funding, the Hub would then start on the next day)	31 December 2020

Additional information:

The UK has potential to grow and prosper sustainably by transitioning to a more circular economy, where resources are processed with sustainability, waste minimisation and efficiency in mind, and where product lifecycles are optimised to generate more economic and social value including by recycling and/or reuse. However, this transition requires clear, evidence-based, implementation pathways, with broad underpinning research evidence. It must provide not only technical, technological and scientific advances, but also the social, behavioural, cultural, ethical, environmental, economic, legal and regulatory understanding required to support a successful transition. The UK Government has committed to delivering a more resource efficient economy in its Resources and Waste Strategy for England.

To address this, the £30 million UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Interdisciplinary Circular Economy programme has been developed by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), and Innovate UK. The programme will support a Coordinator and integration Hub through this call, and up to five interdisciplinary Centres through the call being run concurrently.

The successful Coordinator will be expected to convene the interdisciplinary community to write a proposal for an Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub, with up to £3.3m (at 80% FEC) of funding available for up to 3 years 9 months from 1 January 2021.

UKRI welcomes and encourages applications led by and involving any discipline. This call is being run by EPSRC on behalf of the UKRI Councils listed above.

Applications are welcome from academics that job share, have a part time contract or those currently committed to other large existing grants (centres, hubs, programme grants, Centres for Doctoral Training, etc.) which are due to end with enough time to enable the applicant to be able to fulfil the Coordinator role. Applications are also welcome for two Co-Coordinators.

There are specific requirements, such as on interdisciplinarity, spend dates and monitoring & evaluation. These will be reflected in specific grant conditions.

Contacts:

circular.economy@epsrc.ukri.org (general enquiries)

Dr Lisa Coles, Senior Portfolio Manager, EPSRC 01793 444578
lisa.coles@epsrc.ukri.org

Dr Nick Cooper, Senior Portfolio Manager, EPSRC 01793 444441
nicholas.cooper@epsrc.ukri.org

UK Research and Innovation

UKRI Call: Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research Coordinator

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Summary

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), is inviting proposals for an Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research Coordinator. This is the first part of a two-stage process:

- This first stage is a competition to identify the appropriate Coordinator who will act as thought leader, ambassador, and consensus builder for developing an interdisciplinary circular economy community, facilitating the development of circular economy strategies and approaches. The successful candidate will receive up to £150,000 (at 80% FEC) of funding for up to eleven months and support from UKRI to engage with the full spectrum of interdisciplinary research and stakeholder communities and design a proposal for an Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub.
- At the second stage, the successful Coordinator will be invited to prepare a full application for the Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub and will

need to submit this application by 1 July 2020. If this proposal is successful following peer review, the second stage will be up to 3 years and 9 months of funding (up to £3.3m) for the Hub, led by the Coordinator. The Hub will provide national leadership and coordination, driving knowledge exchange and capacity building across the Circular Economy investments funded under this programme and the wider research and innovation landscape (with academic, policy, consumer, third sector and business stakeholders).

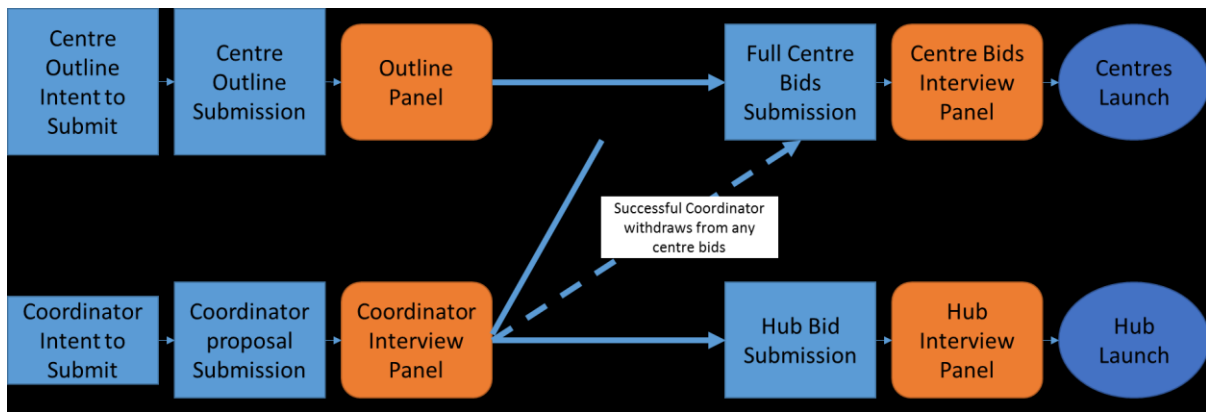
At this first stage, up to £150,000 is available for a grant lasting up to 11 months. The grant must start on or before 17 February 2020 and must finish on 31 December 2020. This grant will be used to build an interdisciplinary community to develop the proposal for the Hub, as well as engaging in relevant knowledge exchange and coordination activities. Funds can be requested for the Coordinator's time, and to fund networking activities, workshops and general admin support during this period.

A mandatory Notification of Intent to Submit, for this first stage, must be submitted to UKRI via the call page before 16:00 on 31 October 2019. Applicants that do not register with their intent will have their applications rejected.

Proposals will be assessed at an interview panel, to be held on 14 January 2020. UKRI reserves the right to include a sift stage before this, based on demand.

The Coordinator (and Hub) will form part of the £30 million UKRI Interdisciplinary Circular Economy programme, collaboratively developed by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), and Innovate UK. The programme will support the Coordinator and interdisciplinary integration Hub, alongside up to five interdisciplinary Centres, and UKRI delivery of community building events. The programme is designed to provide the underpinning research evidence to enable the transition to a more circular economy.

UKRI are running a concurrent call to establish Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centres, each focused on a different nationally-important resource flow. The Hub will be expected to work with the Centres (and vice versa), to integrate the overall programme. Note that UKRI **does not** expect the appointed Circular Economy Coordinator to be an Investigator on a Circular Economy Centre. The successful candidate for Coordinator will therefore have to withdraw from any Centre bids they have been involved in at the outline stage before submission of full Centre proposals.



Background

The circular economy opportunity

Links to key policy, evidence and other reference documents (including those referred to in this section) can be found in Annex 2.

The UK economy is currently too linear: virgin raw material resources are turned into products, used and often disposed of as waste. Without significant change in how resources are managed, raw material consumption is set almost to double by 2060 (OECD – Global Material Resources Outlook to 2060) as the global economy expands and living standards rise. This will increase pressure on the environment even more so than today.

The UK Government recognises the benefits of adopting more circular approaches in several key strategies:

- In the Industrial Strategy, Government set its ambition to double resource productivity by 2050 and work towards zero avoidable waste by 2050; the Growing the Bioeconomy strategy sets out the opportunity for the bioeconomy to support these aims.
- In the Clean Growth Strategy, Government announced their aim to work towards zero food waste to landfill by 2030.
- In the 25 Year Environment Plan, Government announced it would work towards zero avoidable plastic waste by 2042, reform producer responsibility schemes and accelerate the shift to consistent recycling collections.
- The Resources and Waste Strategy for England sets out the UK Government’s commitment to a more resource efficient economy, where resource usage is optimised and waste avoided.

The overarching objective of the Government’s Resources and Waste Strategy is to reduce adverse impacts of resource use on natural capital – from extraction, disposal and greenhouse gas emissions associated with production, consumption and waste management. There are also resource security considerations. The Strategy states that the Government’s preferred model is a circular economy approach. It brings out the importance of the waste hierarchy in achieving this goal, placing emphasis on preventing waste, then reuse followed by recycling/material recovery, waste to energy and landfill.

The programme also aligns with the goals of the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan, the Environment (Wales) Act, and the Investment Strategy NI.

A shift to a more circular economy, where resources are processed with sustainability, waste minimisation and efficiency in mind and where products are designed to encourage optimal utilisation and then recycling/repurposing/reuse, provides an opportunity for the UK to achieve more sustainable and clean economic growth and prosperity. While all predictions are uncertain, the circular economy value opportunity has been estimated as being worth \$4.5 trillion worldwide by 2030 (Accenture).

Key aspects of a circular economy can include:

- resource efficiency in production through greater use of industrial symbiosis systems;
- design of products so they are durable, repairable and recyclable or for buildings, to be repurposable and disassemblable;
- systems for sharing, re-use and resale including product servitisation systems;
- material substitution, recovery and recycling.

A more circular economy can achieve greater sustainability and security of material supply and leave economic activity less vulnerable to virgin raw material price fluctuations or supply shortages. It can lead to development of innovative processes, systems and products that use resources more productively, and minimise waste. A more circular economy reduces pressure on natural capital stocks and on the environment as a waste sink, with potential environmental and social benefits such as improvements in health, wellbeing and natural habitats.

Transition to a circular economy requires significant advances in current knowledge and understanding. It requires the ability to understand and reconfigure whole-systems and change business practices, supply chains and market structures. It also requires knowledge of how people experience and engage with resources and products and what influences their behaviour. It must address the implications of how new business models and approaches would be financed and how these should interact with the regulatory framework. Any outcomes need to also consider the ethical, public acceptability and responsible innovation aspects from the start of the research activities.

Importantly, consideration also needs to be given to the risks and trade-offs associated with the circular economy. These include the consequences for certain sectors and employment levels, how circularity relates to product safety, considerations of environmental impact of new products and processes, and how the risks can be mitigated and solutions identified to enable a stable transition. Circularity is appropriate where it leads to the desired outcomes, and does not cause adverse impacts such as increasing overall greenhouse gas emissions. This consideration of risks and trade-offs as well as benefits needs systems-wide, interdisciplinary thinking, with action across business, government and society.

The UK has an excellent and internationally recognised research base across arts and humanities, biological, engineering, environmental, physical and social sciences. This research base is well-placed to enable the formation of

interdisciplinary communities that will be required to address knowledge gaps relating to the circular economy. However, many current activities focus on a specific technology or economic sector, or part of the system – and these individual activities are often not joined up.

Opportunities exist to gain benefits from circular approaches for many resource flows within and across multiple economic sectors. As all resources – and their related waste streams, uses and sector contexts – have their own supply chain and stakeholders, each will have their own particular challenges that will inform where and when new approaches to circularity are appropriate, with a particular need for cross-sectoral learning and collaboration.

Programme objectives

This programme will build an interdisciplinary circular economy research and innovation community that will co-produce knowledge and advance understanding of the whole-system drivers of downstream outcomes. This will support policymakers and industry with frameworks to make more effective evidence-based decisions, and develop clear implementation pathways. It will be used to accelerate innovative solutions needed to enable change, and support strong national leadership and coordination facilitating cross-sector stakeholder engagement.

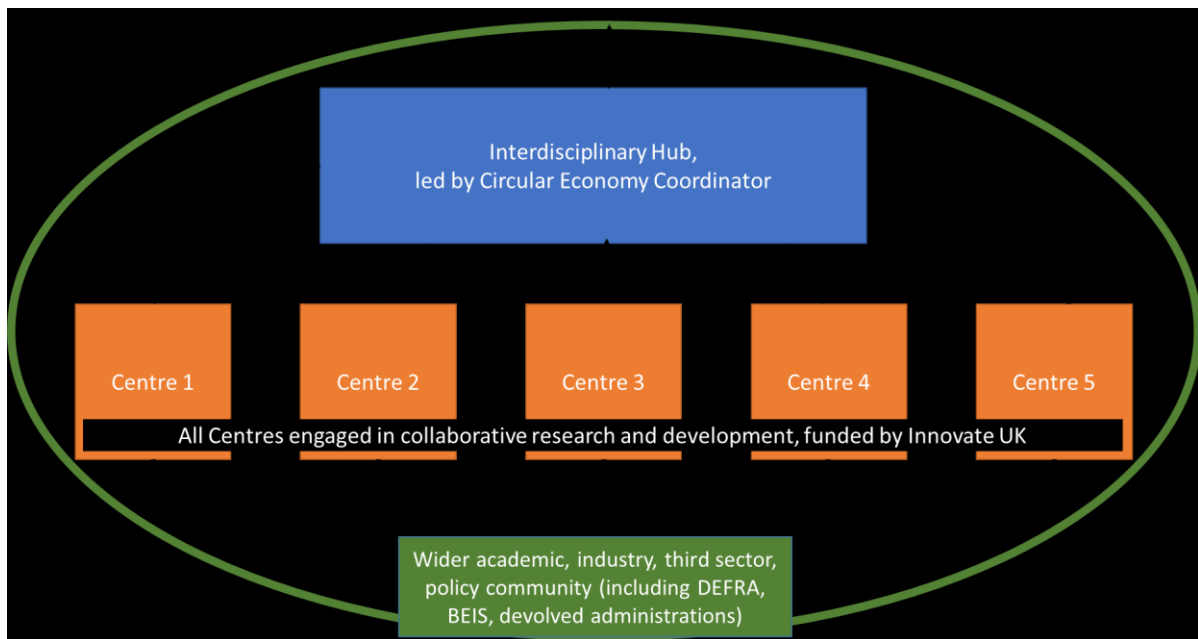
The programme has three key objectives, to:

1. Accelerate understanding and solutions to enable circularity of specific resource flows (including related waste streams and uses, and within sector contexts), by:
 - Identifying opportunities for change at different stages within the whole-system (e.g. material supply, design, value and function, manufacturing, reuse and recycling, resource recovery, waste) and across research, policy, business and individual consumers – and delivering pathways for change within resource flows and related waste streams and uses, through comprehensive fundamental analysis. It will include consideration within and across sector contexts.
 - Enabling identification, quantification and assessment of the environmental, social, cultural, economic, behavioural and technical benefits, risks, costs and trade-offs associated with the circular economy, and how these are valued and understood by different actors
 - Supporting Government, businesses, the third sector and consumers, to improve outcomes, including evidence to inform policy decisions, and to understand the barriers to change and how to overcome them. This will take on board the full range of considerations from environmental and resource security benefits to economic benefits;
 - Accelerating the implementation of new solutions to improve sustainability and reduce environmental impacts (e.g. in design, business/retail models, industrial dynamics, materials, (re)manufacturing and recycling processes, life cycle analysis, natural capital approaches, and cross-cutting technologies), and measures to encourage, incentivise and address barriers to adoption of these

solutions (e.g. regulation, taxes and subsidies, behavioural interventions)

- Offering further understanding of behaviour, values and behavioural change (including causal understanding from experiments) across the whole-system to increase the relevance and uptake of solutions.
 - Providing fundamental understanding of feasible transformation pathways where many agents interact to bring about circularity (consumers, business, third sector, government).
2. Provide national leadership, coordinate and drive knowledge exchange across the programme as a whole and with policy, consumer, third sector and business stakeholders, by:
- Consolidating cross-Centre learning and creating a common understanding of definitions and language for the tools used to deliver circularity (e.g. life cycle analysis, business models, understanding decision making and design);
 - Undertaking comprehensive whole-system research on circularity and examining interrelationships between resource flows and sectors with consideration for specific users and their needs, as well as how new business models can be financed and how regulatory systems may need to evolve;
 - Bringing in expertise from UKRI-wide programmes and resources in emerging fields such as big data, artificial intelligence, the creative economy, and synthetic biology.
3. Ensure research is embedded with stakeholders by involving businesses, policymakers, consumers and society, the third sector, and other affected groups and communities at every part of the programme – including provision of funding to enable SME involvement.

These objectives will be progressed by up to five Centres, and an integration Hub led by a Coordinator. UKRI have published a concurrent call (referred to on the call page for this call) to establish the Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centres, each focused on a different nationally-important resource flow. Centres will be expected to work closely with the Hub, and vice versa, to deliver against the objectives of the programme, and interact with the wider stakeholder community.



Role of the Coordinator

The overall programme is being delivered by UKRI through the funding of up to five Centres, as well as a Coordinator running an integration Hub. The Coordinator will initially receive up to eleven months of funding. During this time, the Coordinator will put together the proposal for a Hub, to run for up to 3 years 9 months from 1 January 2021. If the Hub proposal is awarded following peer review, the Coordinator will act as Principal Investigator for the Hub.

The Coordinator role will be to:

In the initial Coordinator grant:

- Coordinate networking activity to maximise the quality and impact of Centre applications, in particular ensuring excellence is engaged from across disciplines and outcomes are improved.
- Engage with academics, industry, policymakers and other stakeholders to develop an interdisciplinary consortium and subsequent proposal for a national integration hub, to provide leadership and coordination across the centres and wider circular economy landscape;

In both the initial Coordinator grant and the lifetime of the Hub:

- Engage with the interdisciplinary community – across arts and humanities, biological, engineering, environmental, physical and social sciences – to identify key challenges, barriers and opportunities for coordinated activity;
- ensure alignment and promote knowledge exchange across the portfolio of research and innovation in the Centres (including by attending or being represented on Centres' advisory boards) and wider UKRI-funded programmes e.g. ISCF, and to all relevant communities;
- ensure linkages to the user community including primary producers, business and practitioners, product designers, governmental policy

requirements, consumer groups, third sector organisations, and international efforts;

- raise the profile of the programme in all relevant communities;
- support monitoring and evaluation activities as required, by e.g. delivering objectives, capturing data, monitoring and advising the overall programme, providing oversight of how programme inputs/activities lead to interventions, outputs, outcomes and impacts (theory of change);
- provide data management and reporting;
- develop strategies to support research capacity building and skills development within the academic community, as well as with industrial, policymaking and practitioner communities, addressing their needs as part of the research aims;
- Manage a flexible fund as part of the Hub, allowing the academic community to conduct agile research on emerging topics and to help build capacity in the circular economy community;
- provide advice and recommendations to the Programme Management Board, and attend the Strategic Advisory Group.

The full expectations for the Hub will be set out in the Hub call document, but are expected to resemble the description given above. At the full Hub proposal stage, additional leveraged cash and in-kind support from industrial and other stakeholders will be welcomed, although will not be a requirement.

Funding available

At this first stage, a grant for up to £150,000 (UKRI contribution, at 80% FEC) is available for a period of up to eleven months. This grant must start on or before 17 February 2020 and end on 31 December 2020.

The funding can be used for the following:

- Academic time (for the Coordinator(s)). Given the need to convene the community in the relatively short initial grant, UKRI would expect a greater time commitment from the Coordinator (especially during this initial grant period) than, for example, a Principal Investigator on a standard research proposal.
- Administrative support
- Staff to support workshops etc.
- Travel, networking, venues, facilitation, advertising and other subsistence.

In addition to organising community building and networking events to support the development of the Hub proposal, the Coordinator is expected to work with UKRI to organise community building workshops for invited full proposals in the Centres call:

- UKRI will organise and fund a workshop (not from the Coordinator grant funds) working with the Coordinator to bring the Centre applicant teams

together with industry leaders and relevant stakeholders including BEIS and DEFRA. This will take place in February 2020.

- Additionally, the Coordinator is expected to lead on the organisation, working with UKRI, on one national or two regional community/capacity building workshops to bring the broader academic community together with the Centre applicant teams. UKRI will provide funding (not from the grant funds) of up to £15k for this activity.
- In addition, the Coordinator is expected to use grant funds to co-ordinate other networking activities to support community building to maximise the quality and potential impact of Centre applications and the successful development of an interdisciplinary consortium and subsequent proposal for a national integration hub.

Please note: Due to the nature of this funding, grant extensions will only be considered under exceptional circumstances (in line with the Equality Act 2010) and will require UK Research and Innovation agreement on a case-by-case basis. The Research Organisation remains responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010, including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress, and for ensuring that the expectations set out in the UK Research and Innovation statement of expectations for equality and diversity are met.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The long term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent. EPSRC expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice and funding policy. We are committed to supporting the research community, offering a range of flexible options which allow applicants to design a package that fits their research goals, career and personal circumstances. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who job share, have a part-time contract, or need flexible working arrangements.

Peer review is central to EPSRC funding decisions; we require expert advice and robust decision making processes for all EPSRC funding initiatives. We are committed to ensuring that fairness is fully reflected in all our funding processes by advancing policy which supports equality, diversity and inclusion. Please see our Equality and Diversity webpages <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/equalitydiversity/> for further information.

Guidance on Journal-based metrics

As part of our commitment to support the recommendations and principles set out by the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; <https://sfdora.org/read/>), UKRI reviewers and panel members are advised not to use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an investigator's contributions, or to make funding decisions.

The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics, or the identity of the journal, in which it was published, especially for early-stage researchers. Reviewers and panel members are encouraged to consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets, software, inventions, patents, preprints, other commercial activities, etc.) in addition to research publications. We advise our peer reviewers and panel members to consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

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

For this call, standard UKRI eligibility rules apply, relating to the status of the organisation and the employment status of individuals applying. Investigators from **all disciplines supported by UKRI** are welcomed and encouraged to apply.

Applications are welcome from academics that job share, have a part time contract or those currently committed to other large existing grants (centres, hubs, programme grants, Centres for Doctoral Training, etc.) which are due to end with enough time to enable the applicant to be able to fulfil the Coordinator role. This includes having capacity to be the Principal Investigator for the Hub until September 2024, if the Hub proposal is successful.

However, please note that the timeframe for the initial Coordinator grant has rigid start-by and end-by dates, due to the nature of this funding. If you consider that your specific circumstances might lead to difficulty in adhering to these dates, please outline a mitigation plan in your proposal – which could include having a Co-Coordinator (see below).

Applications are welcome for Co-Coordinators. In this case the distinct roles and responsibilities of the two Co-Coordinators (maximum two: one should be listed as PI and one as Co-I) must be given e.g. 1) Strategy, 2) Management. Co-Coordinators must make clear to the panel how they would effectively work together. The expectation will still be for the PI of this initial Coordinator grant to be PI on the subsequent Hub proposal.

The successful applicant must be able to show they can fulfil the assessment criteria (See Person Specification and Assessment Criteria) and become the Circular Economy Coordinator. For applications with Co-Coordinators, the application must demonstrate that the Co-Coordinators jointly fulfil the assessment criteria.

Eligible organisations are Higher Education Institutes, Research Institutes and Research Organisations that can apply for funding from UK Research and

Innovation Research Councils. A list of eligible organisations to apply to UKRI is provided at: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/>.

Certain Public Sector Research Establishments (PSREs) are also eligible to apply. If PSREs wishing to apply have not previously applied for UKRI funding and are not currently designated Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status, they may be required to complete an eligibility form; to be eligible, PSREs will need to demonstrate research capacity and capability relevant to UKRI, as per the standard eligibility rules. PSRE applicants should contact EPSRC at the earliest opportunity to discuss their interests in applying (contact details are provided at the start of this call document).

Please ensure sufficient time to create Je-S accounts for Investigators who do not currently have one.

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

UKRI are running a concurrent call to establish up to five National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centres. Applicants are welcome to apply for both this call and the concurrent outline call for centres. However, UKRI **does not** expect the appointed Circular Economy Coordinator to be an Investigator on a Circular Economy Centre. The successful candidate for Coordinator will therefore have to withdraw from any successful Centre proposal before submission of full Centre proposals. Unsuccessful Coordinator applicants will be eligible to be an Investigator on any full proposal for a Centre.

How to apply

Any applicant that is intending to submit a proposal to this call must submit a notification of Intent to Submit via the online survey on the call page by 16:00 31 October 2019. This is to facilitate the short timescales for peer review, which are a condition of this funding. The Notifications of Intent to Submit will not be assessed, and will be used solely to plan the assessment process, by assessing demand and allowing UKRI to select appropriate non-conflicted panel members. The following will be asked for in the survey:

- Name, department and institution of the applicant(s)
- Brief description (maximum 100 words) detailing your main research area (s) of expertise
- Brief description (maximum 200 words) of your vision for interdisciplinary circular economy research and innovation in the UK

Applicants that do not register with their Notification of Intent to submit by the deadline will have their applications rejected. Please note that the Notification of Intent to submit is not intended to restrict detail in the final submission, and changes will be allowed. The information in the Notification of Intent to submit will not form part of the peer review process.

Submitting a Coordinator application

You should prepare and submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>). **Note that this call will only open in Je-S on 23 September 2019.**

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 UKRI Call: National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Coordinator 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 UKRI. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date. UKRI must receive your application by 16:00 on 19 November 2019.

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/applicationprocess/>) which should be consulted when preparing all proposals.

Although Co-Coordinators can be at two separate institutions, only one Je-S application form should be submitted.

Guidance on writing an application

Further guidance on completing the Je-S form can be found at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/GuidanceonCompletingaStandardG/EthicalInformation.htm>. Other relevant guidance includes: EPSRC's policy on animal use in research (<https://www.epsrc.ukri.org/about/standards/animalresearchpolicy/>) and the Responsible Innovation Framework (<https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/framework/>).

Please note that on submission via Je-S, **all** non-PDF documents uploaded 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. We recommend that all attachments are uploaded into Je-S as Adobe Acrobat files (PDF) to prevent layout changes to the document.

All attachments must be completed in single-spaced typescript in Arial 11 or another sans serif typeface of equivalent size, with margins of at least 2cm. For example, Arial Narrow is not an allowable font type. Text in embedded diagrams or pictures, numerical formulae or references can be smaller, as long as it is legible. Text in tables and figure labels not within embedded diagrams or pictures should be at least 11 point. For advice on writing proposals see:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/>

For applications with two Co-Coordinator, all references to “applicant” below refer to the Co-Coordinator collectively, and applications should outline how the two applicants jointly meet the assessment criteria.

Submissions should include the following documentation:

1) Personal statement – Up to eight A4 pages (use Case for Support in Je-S)

The first page should describe the applicant’s vision for the interdisciplinary circular economy research area.

The following pages should cover how the applicant fits the person specification and assessment criteria – identifying gaps in expertise (research or otherwise), and how the applicant will fulfil these aspects. The applicant should give relevant examples for each criterion. In particular, these seven pages should cover:

- Why the applicant wants the role and what they will bring to it
- How the applicant will lead and be an ambassador to the diverse community (including researchers, industry, policymakers and users), including how they will engage in capacity-building to support the development of researchers from the interdisciplinary community, and build equality, diversity and inclusion into their activities and their team leadership
- How they will engage with the range of Centres prioritised and then funded in the programme, and how they plan to identify and exploit potential opportunities to work with other existing UKRI investments, where appropriate, to maximise impact and outcomes delivered.
- How much time the applicant expects to commit to the role and how they will manage other, existing commitments in order to undertake this role
- Demonstrable links to stakeholders relevant to the circular economy
- How emerging developments and changes in the circular economy landscape would be addressed

Note: the personal statement should be focused primarily on the vision for the initial funding, and how the applicant(s) will convene the interdisciplinary community to build the proposal for the Hub. Nevertheless the personal statement should also include the initial vision for how the applicant(s) will show leadership and engage stakeholders during the lifetime of the Hub.

2) Applicant’s CV – Up to two A4 pages

This should include:

- Employment history
- Academic or professional qualification history.
- Track record of relevant experience: for grants, include start/end dates, funding body, value of award, type of grant (e.g. first grant, fellowship, etc.), your role on the grant (PI, Co-I, Researcher, etc.)
- Any current large project commitments

- Any current administrative activities e.g. may include editorial responsibilities, committee membership, networking activities, etc.
- Other, e.g. may include invited talks, awards, prizes, memberships of professional bodies, etc.

Note: for Co-Coordinator, two such CVs should be provided.

3) Community engagement plan – Up to three A4 pages (Use Workplan in Je-S)

The applicant(s) will detail how they intend to engage with the wider circular economy community (including research, policy, business, third sector) during the initial grant to build a multi- and inter-disciplinary community, and their approach to establishing a strategy for delivery of the Hub. This will include:

- How they will consult with the community and relevant stakeholders, including a clear plan for events and other engagements and how they will encourage an inclusive environment to enable engagement from across the broad and diverse community.
- How they will engage with Centre applicants, including supporting and organising the workshops detailed in the **funding available** section, as they build their consortia. Outline proposals for Centres will be prioritised at a similar time to the Coordinator's appointment (the call document for the Centres call, referenced on the call page for this call, gives further information).
- How they will use the initial Coordinator grant to understand stakeholder needs to inform the research questions for the Hub, and identify key challenges and themes to underpin the objectives of the Hub.
- How they will tailor their engagement and outputs to appropriate audiences, with particular reference to the needs of policy, third sector and business audiences.

Activities focussed on early career researchers and wider inclusive capacity building including for stakeholders will be a key component of the Hub. UKRI expects details of capacity building at the full Hub proposal stage, with evidence that the Coordinator has a strong commitment to support the development of researchers (including early career researchers) – both in the Coordinator's team and in maximising and leveraging opportunities across the programme. At this stage applicants should only set out their approach to supporting inclusive capacity building.

4) Host organisation statement – Up to two A4 pages

A senior leader within your host organisation (e.g. Head of Department or Pro-Vice-Chancellor) must complete a statement (maximum two sides A4) in support of the application. The statement should be on organisation headed paper, dated within 6 months of the submission, and should clearly state the position held by the author. **Note: for Co-Coordinator from two institutions, a host organisation statement is required from both institutions.**

The statement must include details of the following considerations:

- The applicant's key characteristics and skills, which the institution feels highlights the applicant's ability to succeed as a research leader
- The level of support that the host institution will be giving the applicant, both as a standard career development package open to all staff, and additional support as part of the institution's backing of their applicant to be the Coordinator. This may include dedicated administrative support, mentoring etc.

As it is expected that the successful Coordinator will be the Principal Investigator of the Hub (subject to peer review of the Hub proposal), the host organisation should demonstrate its support both for this initial Coordinator grant, and for the Coordinator hosting the Hub until September 2024.

5) Justification of resources – Up to two A4 pages

This should be a narrative description of the need for the resources requested. This can include administrative support, buying out teaching time (if required), funding workshops, venues, travel and networking events.

6) Project Partner letters of support are **not** expected at this stage. However, applicants may include letters if inclusion of a partner is integral to an applicant's plans and the letter is necessary to demonstrate the Project Partner's commitment to delivering the aims of the initial grant.

Assessment

Assessment process

In the event of this call being substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable, UKRI reserve the right to modify the assessment process.

There will be no postal peer review. Proposals will be subject to peer review by an independent interview panel with the expertise necessary to assess the proposals against the criteria listed. Applicants will be invited to attend the panel meeting and provide a short presentation followed by a question and answer session. The panel will be selected by UKRI staff to reflect the remit of the call and the need for interdisciplinarity.

The panel will be invited to produce specific questions based on the proposal documents, which applicants can consider ahead of the interview. These will only form a small proportion of the questions which will be asked within the interview and applicants should be prepared to answer additional questions specific to the proposal documents and related to the assessment criteria listed within this document. Applicants will receive any questions that the panel have identified ahead of time by the close of play 7th January 2020.

The proposals and interview will be assessed by the panel to generate a rank ordered list taking into consideration the extent to which the proposals have addressed the assessment criteria. The panel will provide feedback, where appropriate, to successful and unsuccessful proposals. The successful Coordinator will be expected to take this feedback into account when building a consortium and proposal for the Hub.

UKRI will make a final decision on who will be asked to be the Coordinator, based on the recommendation of the panel.

Person specification and assessment criteria

Since this is primarily an assessment of the applicant (for Co-Coordiators, applicants) and their ability to lead, this stage of the process does not use the standard assessment criteria for a research proposal. Instead, a competency-based person specification is used to describe the desired qualities, skills, experience, and attributes expected to be demonstrated by a successful applicant(s), as provided in the table below. Note that the role is not just about research coordination, but is more outward facing in terms of engagement with stakeholders and understanding the research landscape.

For applications with two Co-Coordiators, all references to “applicant” below refer to the Co-Coordiators collectively, and applications should outline how the two applicants jointly meet the assessment criteria.

Attribute	Subset	Criteria
The candidate (Primary criterion)	Thought leadership	The applicant must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to assemble key information across disciplines to build a compelling narrative and communicate this, effectively, to the right stakeholders at the right time • Evidence of giving advice to or influencing business and third sector research users and/or policy makers
	Inspirational team leader	The applicant must demonstrate their ability to guide and inspire others and to identify and maximise potential in others
	Community ambassador	The applicant must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a profile within the research community for research excellence, and of the ability to act as a figurehead for the UK circular economy community • How they would act as an ambassador to the wider research and user communities and advocate for circular economy research and innovation

	Strategic vision	<p>The applicant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a strategic thinker who is focused on ensuring the interdisciplinary research achieves maximum impact, and has considered the pathways to achieve this impact • Demonstrate an aptitude for identifying, exploring and developing research opportunities more broadly and across different interfaces • Demonstrate where they have positioned themselves to take-up opportunities and have the ability to make decisions to deliver their vision
	Track record of coordinating research and translation	<p>The applicant must demonstrate a track record of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leading and managing interdisciplinary research, delivering demonstrable impact and translating research outputs to users (e.g. to industry, the innovation infrastructure, third sector or HM Government) – at both the national and international level. • Working inclusively across or with a broad range of disciplines, bringing together varied approaches and interests.
	Understanding of the UK circular economy landscape	<p>The applicant must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus both on their specific research and on a systems view of the circular economy • Good understanding of the interdisciplinary research and innovation needed to form a cohesive programme, and address the programme objectives and delivery of improved outcomes.
Communication and engagement skills (secondary criterion)	Communication	The applicant must demonstrate excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
	Engagement	<p>The applicant must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to implement the comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercises needed during the initial grant to identify key audiences and develop strategies for inclusive engagement • The skills for effective knowledge exchange, or the ability to facilitate others to carry out these tasks

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective and compelling plan for engaging with and supporting the wider circular economy community over the length of the initial grant to ensure a diverse range of people are involved and engaged with
	Capacity building	The applicant must demonstrate an ability and interest in inclusive skills development for their team and the community
Host institute environment (secondary criterion)		The host institute(s) must demonstrate how it will support the applicant during this initial grant, and for the lifetime of the Hub, if subsequently funded.
Resources and Management (secondary criterion)		<p>The applicant must demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the resources requested in this application are justified and appropriate for delivering the proposed outcomes; The initial grant will be planned and managed effectively, including the management and development of any staff, and identification of key risks with contingencies.

Further details of the Hub call assessment criteria proposal will follow in a subsequent call document.

Grant additional conditions (GACs)

Grants will be subject to the standard UK Research and Innovation grant conditions; however, due to the nature of this funding, the following grant additional conditions will be added to this call:

- This call is subject to the following conditions:

- GAC 1 – Engagement with Centres (and Centre proposals)

This grant is awarded on the condition that the Coordinator will work in strategic partnership with those invited to develop full proposals, in the concurrent circular economy Centres call, and subsequently with successful Centres, as well as undertaking a wider networking role with the research and user community.

The Coordinator will attend Centre meetings as required (or, where necessary, put forward a representative to do this), providing regular project updates and reports, and engaging fully with the

Centres' management and steering groups. Failure to do so will result in the suspension of the grant.

- GAC 2 - Reporting

In addition to the requirements set out in the standard UKRI grant condition RGC 7.4.3, the Grant Holder is responsible for providing progress reports against non-financial performance metrics, when requested by UKRI. A detailed list of performance metrics and instructions for reporting will be agreed with the Grant Holder upon commencement of the grant.

- GAC 3 - Involvement of EPSRC Project Officer(s)

EPSRC will nominate Project Officer(s) who will be the EPSRC Contact(s). EPSRC staff (or their UKRI nominee) will be invited as observers and members to governance meetings. The Project Officer(s) should have access to all documentation of Governance and Reporting bodies unless the documentation is subject to commercial confidentiality in which circumstance the Project Officer(s) will be required to sign required non-disclosure documents.

The Coordinator will also be expected to attend (or send a representative) to the UKRI programme's strategic advisory group meetings when invited.

- GAC 4 - Cost and time overrun

No slippage or grant extensions (beyond exceptional circumstances in line with the Equality Act 2010) will be allowed. EPSRC will not be responsible for any cost overrun incurred during the course of this grant. The Research Organisation(s) will be required to make up any shortfall from alternative sources.

- GAC 5 – Expenditure

The financial profiles are based on those provided in the BEIS allocation letter to UKRI.

In addition to any reporting requirements set out in GAC 4, the Grant Holder must immediately notify the UKRI Project Officer(s) of any accumulation, slippage or variation in expenditure greater than 5% of the annual profiled funding. We reserve the right to re-profile the grant if required.

Any deviation from the agreed allocation of funding and profiled costs must be negotiated and approved through written consent by UKRI. The approval of profile changes should not be assumed and will be dependent on spend across all associated grants.

At the end of the grant period a breakdown of the expenditure should be submitted along with the final expenditure statement.

- GAC 6 – Start date of the Grant

Notwithstanding RGC 5.2 Starting Procedures, this grant has a fixed start date of 17 February 2020 – no slippage of this date will be permitted. Expenditure may be incurred prior to the start of the grant and be subsequently charged to the grant, provided that it does not precede the date of the offer letter.

- GAC 7 – Publicity and Branding

In addition to RGC 12.4 Publication and Acknowledgement of Support, the Grant Holder must make reference to the UKRI Circular Economy programme and UKRI funding and include the UKRI logo and relevant branding on all online or printed materials (including press releases, posters, exhibition materials and other publications) related to activities funded by this grant.

- GAC 8 – Hub proposal

The Grant Holder is expected to submit a proposal for the Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub by 01 July 2020, or on a later date if agreed by UKRI.

Moving forward

Submissions to this call will not count towards the EPSRC Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Further information about the policy can be found at: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/basics/resubpol/rua/>

More detailed information for the Hub submission will be provided to the successful Coordinator.

Key dates

Activity	Date
Information webinar	17 October, 11.00; 22 October, 13.30
Intent to submit deadline	31 October 2019, 16.00
Call closes	19 November 2019, 16.00
Interview panel	14 January 2020
Decisions to applicants	w/c 20 January 2020
Latest grant start date	17 February 2020
Hub full proposal submission deadline	01 July 2020
Grant end date (note: upon successful award of Hub funding, the Hub would then start on the next day)	31 December 2020

*EPSRC aims to adhere to the key dates as published; however there may be exceptions where the panel meetings may have to change due to panel member availability.

Contacts

circular.economy@epsrc.ukri.org (general enquiries)

Dr Lisa Coles, Senior Portfolio Manager, EPSRC 01793 444578
lisa.coles@epsrc.ukri.org

Dr Nick Cooper, Senior Portfolio Manager, EPSRC 01793 444441
nicholas.cooper@epsrc.ukri.org

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Lisa Coles and Nick Cooper	12.09.2019	1.0	Initial draft
Lisa Coles and Nick Cooper	24.09.2019	1.1	Additional links added to Annex 1. Additional information about pre-interview procedure. Webinar times added.
Lisa Coles	17/10/19	1.2	Correction to start date of Hub on page 10.

Appendix: Je-S attachments Check List

Attachment Type	Maximum Page length	Mandatory/ Optional	Extra Guidance
Case for Support	Eight pages	M	The first page should comprise the applicant's vision, and the remaining pages should cover the content requested in this call document.
Workplan	Three pages	M	To cover community engagement plan
Justification for Resources	Two pages	M	
CVs	Two pages each	M	For Coordinator, or both Co- Coordinators.
Host Organisation Statement	Two pages	M	For Co- Coordinators from two institutions, two letters should be provided.
Proposal Cover Letter	No page limit	Optional	The cover letter can be used to highlight any important information to EPSRC. This attachment type is not seen by panel members.
Project Partner Letter of Support	No page limit	As required	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.
Letter of Support	No page limit	Optional	In exceptional circumstances a maximum of

			three letters can be submitted.
Other attachment	No page limit	As required, at EPSRC request only	This can be used for a document that does not fit under any of the headings above. This attachment type is not seen by reviewers or panel members.

Annex 1: Links to key policies and strategies

UKRI have provided links below to policies and strategies of relevance to the circular economy.

Public sector strategies, policies and activities

UKRI Delivery Plans: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/delivery-plans/>

Government strategies:

- Industrial Strategy:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future>
- Clean Growth Strategy
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy/clean-growth-strategy-executive-summary>
- 25 Year Environment Plan
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>
- Resources and Waste Strategy for England
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>
- Growing the Bioeconomy:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bioeconomy-strategy-2018-to-2030>

Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan:

<https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2010/06/08092645/11>

Environment (Wales) Act:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted>

Investment Strategy NI: <http://www.isni.gov.uk/home/>

Other references in the call document

OECD Global Material Resources Outlook to 2060, OECD, 2018:

<http://www.oecd.org/environment/global-material-resources-outlook-to-2060-9789264307452-en.htm>

Accenture report: <https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insight-creating-advantage-circular-economy>

Ellen MacArthur Foundation: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>

Outputs of UKRI circular economy workshop:

<https://epsrc.whp.rcuk.ac.uk/newsevents/pubs/ukri-circular-economy-workshops-june-2019/>

Other relevant UKRI documents

Outputs of 2016 Research Council workshop:

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/circular-economy-workshop-report/>

BBSRC reports on the bioeconomy, biotechnology and bioscience:

<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/1607-evidencing-the-bioeconomy-report/>

<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/forward-look-for-uk-bioscience-pdf/>

<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/capital-economics-biotech-britain-july-2015/>

Technopolis Impact assessment of EPSRC funding on the circular economy:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/newsevents/pubs/impactassessmentepsrcfundingcirculareconomy/>

Other relevant documents suggested by UKRI

Example relevant links to the Waste and Resources Action Plan (WRAP) website:

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/about-us/about/wrap-and-circular-economy>

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/employment-and-circular-economy>

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/econometric-modelling-and-household-food-waste>

http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Courtauld_2025_Annual_Review_2017_18.pdf

UN Sustainable Development Goals:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication>

UN Global Resources Outlook, 2019:

<http://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook>

BEIS Green Finance Strategy:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/813656/190701_BEIS_Green_Finance_Strategy_Accessible_PDf_FINAL.pdf

CCC: Net Zero: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

Reports from the Natural Capital Committee:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/natural-capital-committee-documents>

Scottish Government circular economy strategy:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-things-last-circular-economy-strategy-scotland/>

Zero Waste Scotland website: <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/our-work/circular-economy>

Welsh Government Sustainable Management Guide:
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/sustainable-management-of-natural-resources-guide.pdf>

POST Note on Designing a Circular Economy:
<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0536/POST-PN-0536.pdf>

Bibliometric analysis of circular economy research:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329293962_Worldwide_Research_on_Circular_Economy_and_Environment_A_Bibliometric_Analysis

Deloitte/Utrecht report on circular economy in the EU:
https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/171106_white_paper_breaking_the_barriers_to_the_circular_economy_white_paper_vweb-14021.pdf

Next Manufacturing Revolution report:
<http://www.nextmanufacturingrevolution.org/nmr-report-executive-summary>

Reports from the Valuing Nature Network: <http://valuing-nature.net/natural-capital-synthesis-reports-0>

ESRC suggested publications

<https://www.cccep.ac.uk/publication/sustainable-growth-in-the-uk-seizing-opportunities-from-technological-change-and-the-transition-to-a-low-carbon-economy/>

<https://steps-centre.org/publication/the-circular-economy-and-the-global-south/>

<https://steps-centre.org/publication/chinas-low-carbon-future-offers-global-opportunities/>

<https://steps-centre.org/publication/the-new-politics-and-geographies-of-scarcity/>

<https://steps-centre.org/publication/destabilisation-of-sustainable-energy-transformations-analysing-natural-gas-lock-in-in-the-case-of-germany/>

https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/p/bookchapter_gb_circularity-thinking/

<https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/aetw/pwg/>

https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/aetw/gb_ce-sp/
Blog (based on research findings) – Brennan

<https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/p/sustainable-value-and-trade-offs/>

<https://www.cecan.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-01/11%20-%20Waste%20Crime%20%28final%29.pdf>

https://resourcerecoveryfromwaste.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/rrfw_programme_brochure_web_spreads.pdf

https://resourcerecoveryfromwaste.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/rrfw_industry_co-creation_report_sept2018.pdf

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969718331887>

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/5/1401>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23789689.2017.1405654>

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/9/9/1603>

https://resourcerecoveryfromwaste.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/rrfw-2019_multidimensional-value-assessment-of-cos.pdf

https://resourcerecoveryfromwaste.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/rrfw-psa-synthesis-report_final.pdf

https://resourcerecoveryfromwaste.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/rrfw_2018_evolution-of-mht-for-resource-recovery-from-msw-in-uk.pdf