Guidance for Digital Economy Reviewers and Panel Members

Reviewer Selection and Expertise

- Our 'gold standard' for selecting reviewers in this area is to identify individuals who can assess the breadth of a Digital Economy proposal. However, securing individual reviewers that each cover all elements can be challenging and in some instances a discipline-focused perspective can be very valuable, e.g. to consider end user relevance.

- Reviewers should clearly identify their expertise relevant to the proposal, outlining areas they have confidence in reviewing and areas where they are less/not confident. Panel members should then use this information to consider the balance of reviews received across the science areas covered by the proposal and to tension reviewer perspectives. The PI response may be useful in this regard for gauging the significance of issues identified.

Proposal Assessment

- Reviewers and panel members should be mindful of potential for ‘double jeopardy’ when considering the different elements of proposals. It may be the combination of expertise and ideas that make a proposal innovative, or give it the potential to lead to a step change outcome, rather than a breakthrough in any one domain.

- Reviewers and panel members should be aware that Digital Economy proposals are likely to have broad relevance beyond traditional disciplines and Council remits (although at least 50% of the proposal should be engineering and/or physical science research) bear this in mind when considering issues such as relevance to the Councils’ strategies and potential impacts.

- Reviewers and panel members should be mindful that interdisciplinary Digital Economy proposals may have subtle differences to proposals based within a single discipline. For example:
  - publication ‘track record’ and other measures of research output may be different depending on the home discipline of the researcher;
  - multidisciplinary teams may require a higher level of resources to bring the necessary skill sets into a project;
  - proposals may vary in duration, either being longer to allow for building of interdisciplinary links or shorter to support feasibility type studies.

- Reviewers and panel members should recognise that technology-focused proposals may not directly address a research hypothesis as a primary output, or may be focused on higher-risk proof of concept studies.
The Councils accept this is important within the sphere of technology-focused development. Proposals may contain preliminary data or propose alternative strategies to help deal with risk mitigation.

- **Panel members** should bear in mind that reviewers may approach Digital Economy proposals from different perspectives. Alert the panel to any issues of this nature that you have identified. It is important for assessors to look at all elements of reviews submitted and form a view of the 'sum of parts'.