Healthcare Technologies New Challenges
NetworkPlus Call Frequently Asked Questions

This document may be updated to reflect those questions most frequently raised by potential applicants. This document should be referred to in conjunction with the call document. If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to contact jeanine.woolley@epsrc.ukri.org or kate.reading@epsrc.ukri.org

General questions

Q: I could not attend the webinar, is there a recording available?
A: A recording is available on the following link.
https://ukri.zoom.us/rec/share/opRyErjJ1z1LZo3L42rwXakAPIm9aaa81HAbqfcOzb8Cf-oXs63W2y-NnhCqd
Password: ^LPr6h%

Q: What should be included in the outline proposal?
A: Guidance is given on page 7 of the call document. Applicants should also consider whether they have provided sufficient evidence against the call criteria.

Q: Do I have to complete the ‘Intent to submit’ survey?
A: Yes, anyone intending to submit a proposal to this call must register their Intent to Submit by 16:00, 4 September 2020. (see “How To Apply” section for detail). Applicants that do not register their intent to submit before the deadline will be ineligible for the call. The deadline for outline proposals are 16:00, 15 September 2020.

Q: Do EPSRC expect certain start dates for grants?
A: EPSRC do not expect specific start dates for these grants, however the standard UKRI rules will apply (for example your grant must start within six months of the start date you provide in your application).

Q: Are EPSRC expecting there to be consortia of universities bidding for these grants or could grants be led by single universities?
A: We are not prescriptive about this. The Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators will be part of the management team. If the management team are all in one university that’s fine; if they are from a range of institutions that is also fine. The NetworkPlus should however be national in reach.

Q: Will outline proposals assessed by postal peer review?
A: No, nor will full proposals. At both stages, proposals will be assessed by an expert panel.
Q: Criteria at outline and full proposal stage are different, why?
At the outline stage, the panel will be asked to address the importance (which should bring in relevance to theme strategy, challenges and research areas) potential to develop cross-cutting capabilities, potential to drive high quality research and the value that would be added by a network with this focus. At the full proposal stage, there is also a focus on how it will work, including factors such as management of the network, feasibility funding and sustainability after the lifetime of the grant.

Q: How will the Networkplus be measured?
The expectation is that the Networkplus awards set up an Advisory Board within the first year and agree their own metrics and good practice. EPSRC representation at these meetings will be important. A reporting framework is to be designed by the award and approved by the Advisory Board. EPSRC would appreciate copies of reports and updates to be shared as appropriate.

Q: Can we use plus funds for infrastructure for our network?
A: Equipment is not available through this call. We would expect to see websites and other means of sharing information.

Q: Can we ask for funding for administration of the network?
Yes. As it says in the call document, the proposal should request enough to help in the co-ordination of the network and to ensure its smooth running. Bear in mind this includes administration of the plus costs.

Q: How close does the costing have to be to the final proposal?
A: The costs requested in the full proposal should be within +/-10% of the total estimated in the outline proposal, unless feedback from the outline panel indicates otherwise or prior agreement is obtained from EPSRC.

Q: Is this at 80% FEC? What about the “plus” funds?
Yes, normal arrangements apply with grants to universities being at 80% fEC. It will be for the grant-holding organisation to make arrangements with recipients of “plus” funds for the transfer(s), including how those recipients will manage the 80%.

Q: Can existing networks apply to this call?
Each network should be a new collaboration and be about forming a new interdisciplinary research community and identifying new interdisciplinary research topics. If an existing Network Principal Investigator submits a proposal for a new Network, it is important that he or she shows how the new proposal is different from the previous Network. An incremental change from the aims / objectives / remit will not normally be funded.

Q: Could you share a link to existing Healthcare Technologies Networkplus?
A listing is in the annex.

Q: Could you share links to other Healthcare Technologies opportunities which are open at the moment?


**Who can be involved and in what capacity?**

**Q. Do the investigators have to be engineers or clinical staff?**
A: No. The applicant team should reflect the research focus for the network. You will want to be confident that collectively you have relevant interest and expertise. The leadership team should also be able to commit the time and effort necessary to lead the network. The PI may be from any eligible organisation (includes many NHS Trusts as well as UK HEIs).

**Q. I am a non-UK academic. Am I eligible to apply for this call?**
A: No, only UK Higher Education Institutions that receive grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies are eligible to receive funds for research, postgraduate training and associated activities. More information on eligibility https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/. EPSRC does not provide a brokerage service by helping you find UK academics or collaborators. You might wish to consider checking within your Research Organisation, to see if colleagues can help find academics in the UK.

**Q: Can we involve people from non-UK countries?**
A: Please include people in other countries as you feel appropriate where they contribute something that cannot be obtained in the UK. They are not eligible to be Co-Investigators, but they could be project partners, members of your management or advisory boards, and so on.

**Q: Can Networks include overseas partners for collaboration purposes?**
A: Yes, network activities link research groups and industrial organisations, often across disciplines and countries to develop new or enhanced collaborations. Funding is available to support workshops, visits, travel and part-time coordinators, see link below for further information. https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/routes/international/

**Q: Can I provide funding for partners?**
A: You cannot pay project partners (i.e. those who are expressing support and providing a cash or in-kind contribution, as declared on the Je-S form) on the grant, because project partners cannot both benefit from and contribute to a grant. In terms of university partners, Principal and Co-Investigators can request salary and travel costs. If there are Project Partners collaborating on a research project, EPSRC requires a Letter of Support. Well-written letters can significantly strengthen research proposals by demonstrating the benefits of the collaboration, and the potential impacts of the research, see link for more detail: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/lettersofsupport/

**Q: Can PhD students be funded through the “plus” funds?**
A: Only if they are funded as research staff while their doctoral studies are in abeyance.
Q: Are letters of support allowed at the outline stage?
A: No, letters of support are not allowed at the outline stage, however, please mention your partners, or potential partners, in your case for support. You need to be clear in your outline proposal about the stage of discussion you have reached with your project partners and collaborators.

Q: Can feasibility studies be carried out by industrial partners?
A: The same eligibility rules apply as for standard grants; industrial members can only be paid as subcontractors; in which case they need to be able to demonstrate that they are providing a service that cannot be provided by university partners. As with any situation where public money is being allocated, the NetworkPlus should have rigorous processes set up in order to determine the destination of any feasibility study funding.

Q: If I am from a host university, can anyone from my own university participate in feasibility studies?
A: Yes. We do however expect this to be a nationwide effort involving the best people. Processes for allocation of funds must be fair and transparent.

Q: Can I submit a research proposal that is related to the NetworkPlus?
A: You can submit both a standard mode proposal to the standard mode scheme as well as a NetworkPlus bid to this call, but there can be no overlap in the resources requested and each proposal should be able to stand alone.

Q: Can I be involved in more than one NetworkPlus bid?
A: We would not expect anyone to be Principal Investigator on more than one proposal. Involvement as an investigator on a NetworkPlus grant is a significant commitment and applicants should think carefully about acting as an investigator on more than one bid.

**What EPSRC is looking for**

Q. Do we expect it to be short- or longer-term research questions (eg. Covid 19 compared to improving maternal health)

The criteria are in the call document and include the importance of the topic, its potential to drive high quality research and the value that would be added by having a network with this focus. A network might be sought for any research challenge in engineering and physical sciences that addresses the healthcare technology grand challenges.

Q: Does it have to be a narrow focus?
The criteria are in the call document and a network could be very focused or quite broad. It will be for you to make the case that its important, would drive high quality engineering and physical sciences research that addresses the grand challenges and would add value.

Q: What do network members get from a network?
A successful network will help to drive high quality research. All participants can draw on the network to shape their own research agenda and inform that of colleagues. As well as distributing funds for feasibility studies, a network can help build new collaborations within and across sectors that can strengthen research proposals and the potential for impact. It
will be for the network team to make their case about the added value in their proposal and, if successful, to follow that through with their research communities.

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