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: 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.

Q: Are letters of support allowed at the outline stage?
A: No, letters of support are not allowed 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 as 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: 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: 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 NetworkPluses should however be national in reach.

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 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.

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: Can we have clinicians or other co-investigators and how many?
A: The eligibility for investigators and co-investigators is the same as for other proposals to EPSRC and can include clinical staff. There is more information on the EPSRC website. There can be up to five investigators (The Principal Investigator and up to four Co-Investigators). We appreciate that this requires proposals to make a distinction between the people setting up and leading the network and those who may be advising on or participating in the network. For further information, please see the section on Funding Available in the call document.

Q: What’s the difference between a project partner and a collaborator?
A: A Project Partner is a collaborating organisation with an integral role in the proposed research network. Project Partners cannot receive funding from the grant. There should be
a letter of support from each project partner. There is more information regarding project partner letters of support on the website.

There are no restrictions regarding collaborating organisations. However, please note that while there are no restrictions on the number of project partners and therefore the number of project partner letters of support, there are restrictions regarding other letters of support (e.g., from collaborators). In exceptional circumstances a maximum of three letters can be submitted. See the section on Je-S attachments in the call document.

Q: We can’t ask for funding for equipment, what about services?
A: There are not excluded, but you will need to consider how to make the case for any facilities or services in relation to the assessment criteria and in competition with other proposals.

Change log

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