

Call for Statements of Need for Large Scale Infrastructure

Call type: Invitation for Outlines

Closing date: Open Call

Funding Available: No direct funding is available through this call.

This call is to identify the need for large infrastructure funding within the remit of EPSRC. Typically of a value greater than would be normally expected through the Strategic Equipment Process and National Research Facilities, such proposals will have been explored with the infrastructure theme in advance and invited to submit to this call. Such 'statements of need' will be prioritised at a panel to be developed for future UKRI wide equipment discussions.

How to apply: Submission of full Statements of Need. This call will be available <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UJGXPR/>

Assessment Process:

Invited proposals will be submitted as a statement of need for the UK research capability. Submissions will be peer reviewed by an expert panel and a prioritisation will be made as to which of these proposals should be considered for future funding. Working with EPSRC these proposals will be further discussed and written up to make a strong case for UKRI wide equipment consideration.

Key Dates:

Activity	Date
Open call	N/A

Contacts: For any questions regarding the general process, please contact:

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Call for Large Scale Infrastructure Statements of Community Need

Call type: Call type: Outlines

Closing date: OPEN

Related themes: Across all of ESRC

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Summary

This call is to support large scale infrastructure where there is scope to enable new world leading research and a create a capability for the UK. As such there should be an element of access to the community as well as an excellent potential for future research programmes envisaged by the applicants. There will be a strong strategy which the infrastructure will contribute both at the institutional and national level.

Background

EPSRC wishes to identify important and potentially research area disruptive large infrastructure of the scale of tens of millions which would normally not have a clear route for discussion and consideration via normal EPSRC standard panels and calls.

To help gain an understanding of how EPSRC funds the majority of equipment needs we encourage applicants to look at the following:

Strategic Equipment Process:

http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/themes/researchinfrastructure/sub_themes/access/midrange/mrfvsse/

The Infrastructure Theme:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/RESEARCH/OURPORTFOLIO/THEMES/RESEARCHINFRASTRUCTURE/?desktop=1>

National Research Facilities:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/access/nationalresearch/>

The balance of funding as part of the entire EPSRC portfolio is potentially an important consideration. For more information about EPSRC's portfolio and strategies, see our website: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/>

Funding available

No direct funding is available through this call. Following the initial review panel, if selected, EPSRC will work to further refine the proposal need in advance of UKRI wide opportunities.

We do ask for an indicative estimate of the likely cost of the infrastructure. Requirements should be split into capital and recurrent costs for up to 5 years.

Any future funding announcements will be dependent on available budget and spend timings.

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 UK Research and Innovation Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/skills/action-plan-edi-2016/>

In line with the UK Research and Innovation 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 welcome 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

<https://www.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

As this is a call for large infrastructure it is expected that any requests would be above the OJEU limit and subject to the following considerations:

Eligibility

The majority of use for the proposed work should be within the EPSRC domain and submitted by an EPSRC eligible PI.

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/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

All Statements of Need must apply via
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UJGXPR/>

This is an open call and forms may be submitted when ready.

Applicants should carefully read the guidance provided in this call document and address all of the assessment criteria. EPSRC will not accept a Statement of Need for a facility where an existing capability is already available with capacity to undertake similar research.

The Statement of Need will be sent to expert reviewers and the applicants will be allowed to respond to the reviewers' comments. EPSRC will then convene a panel of infrastructure specialists, covering a wide range of expertise, across the EPSRC remit, to produce a prioritised list of Statements of Need which EPSRC will use as the basis for the proposals that it submits to the next round of the UKRI Infrastructure Fund.

Guidance on writing an application

The sections you will be asked to complete on the "Statement of Need" (SoN) for the large scale infrastructure investments template are as follows:

- a) **Ambition and Vision:** The SoN needs to articulate the ambition of the proposed infrastructure in terms of the scientific advances that could be delivered. What big challenges or research questions will it help to address? This should include the following elements:
- i. **Vision:** What is your vision for the proposed infrastructure? What does success look like in 5-10 years' time?
 - ii. **Quality:** Present the science that will be enabled by the proposed infrastructure. Provide evidence of the quality of research to be enabled and the research areas which will benefit from the infrastructure.
 - iii. **Step Change:** How is what is proposed a step change in infrastructure capability and how does this fit into the existing infrastructure landscape?
- (6,000 characters incl. spaces)
- b) **Strategic Importance and Context:** This should include the following elements:
- i. **Strategic Drivers:** When is this infrastructure needed and why (this allows for consideration of longer-term needs)? Why is this the most appropriate way to deliver it? How does it align with and deliver EPSRC / UKRI strategies?
 - ii. **National Context:** A clear explanation of the existing UK and international landscape, in terms of the available facilities and equipment. How does the proposed infrastructure address a genuine UK capability and/or capacity need?

- iii. **Impact:** What potential impact will the proposed infrastructure have on the research community and how will it work with industrial interests, across the range of types of impact (scientific/academic, people, economic, skills and training, socio-economic etc.),

(6,000 characters incl. spaces)

- c) **Users and Community Engagement:** There must also be information and evidence on the level of community engagement and support that has led to the Statement of Need. This should include the following elements:
 - i. **User Base:** What is the potential target user base and what evidence is there of community demand? A clearly thought through pathway for expanding the user base
 - ii. **Community Engagement:** What community engagement has been carried out to quantify and validate this demand?
 - iii. **Partnerships:** Key partners (if relevant) and whether this involvement has been secured or is hoped for.

(6,000 characters incl. spaces)

- d) **Description of the Infrastructure and what it will enable:** This should include the following elements:
 - i. **The Infrastructure:** Describe the background to this infrastructure request. Justify why this is the right approach for taking this project forward and what the consequences would be of not taking this project forward.
 - ii. **Delivery Approach:** A description of the type of infrastructure proposed and the delivery approach that was chosen. Including proposed project management, governance and accessibility to the wider UK research and innovation community.
 - iii. **Options analysis:** How did you decide on this approach for the infrastructure, what other options were considered? What would happen if this were not to be supported?
 - iv. **Technological Approach:** Where the infrastructure is based around a technology please indicate why this technological approach was chosen over alternatives and if the technical feasibility has been externally assessed.
 - v. **Risks:** What are the major risks to the successful delivery of this infrastructure and how might they be mitigated?

(6,000 characters incl. spaces)

- e) **Authors and Community Engagement:** A list of who was directly involved in writing the Statement of Need (name, institution/company and research interests).

(6,000 characters incl. spaces)

- f) **Indicative resources:** At this point, we are not reviewing the resource levels but an indication of what would be needed will be useful for planning purposes. Indicative capital and resource costs for the establishment phase of the infrastructure would be most useful at this stage.

(3,000 characters incl. spaces)

For advice on writing proposals see:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/preparing/>

Assessment

Assessment process

The Statements of Need will be sent to expert reviewers and the applicants will be allowed to respond to the reviewers' comments. EPSRC will then convene a panel of infrastructure specialists, covering a wide range of expertise, across the EPSRC remit, to produce a prioritised list of Statements of Need which EPSRC will use as the basis for the proposals that it submits to the next round of the UKRI Infrastructure Fund.

Assessment criteria

The expert reviewers will be asked to comment on the following criteria:

- i. **Quality (Primary):** World-leading science must be enabled by the proposed investment, the funding of such an infrastructure in the research area should lead to new scientific progress and be of central importance to the research community. Reviewers will be asked to comment on:
- i. The research vision and mission – will the infrastructure enable and support a range of excellent research?
 - ii. Does the proposed infrastructure demonstrate sufficient research leadership and ambition?
 - iii. Will the infrastructure bring added benefit to the existing landscape and how does it align to that wider landscape?
 - iv. Has the proposal explained how this is a step-change in capability from the status quo? What will be different if this is funded? What will happen if this is not funded?
- j. **Users and Community Engagement:** The Statement of Community Need must demonstrate a strong community demand and that there has been sufficient engagement with the community to back up and focus the need for the infrastructure. Reviewers will be asked to comment on:
- i. The level of engagement of potential users in the development of the

Statement of Need.

- ii. The plans for expanding the interest within the research communities, business and other users.
 - iii. The potential demand for using the proposed infrastructure.
- k. **Strategic Importance and Context (Secondary):** Considering the existing research landscape the SoN is required to be justified in terms of presenting a genuine UK need and alignment with EPSRC and wider UKRI and national priorities. How will such an investment provide added benefit to the existing landscape and how will this deliver against EPSRC's strategic priorities. Reviewers will be asked to comment on:
- i. Is there a convincing rationale for why this infrastructure is needed now?
 - ii. How strategically important is this proposal (at a research area level, research funder level, national level)?
- l. **The Potential Infrastructure (Secondary):**
- i. What, if any, options analysis has been undertaken to decide on this approach?
 - ii. Are there any concerns about the feasibility of the technological approach?
 - iii. Are there any major risks that have not been considered?

Moving Forward

Apply via smart survey – <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UJGXPR/>

once you have spoken with EPSRC and are ready to submit. Please contact the listed contacts in case of questions. The assessment process will include expert peer review with a right to apply as detailed in the 'assessment process' section of this call.

Additional Grant Conditions

Conditions may apply with regards to spend profiles and procurement dates of large capital equipment. EPSRC will contact you in the event of a successful application.

Key dates

Activity	Date
Submission deadline	OPEN N/A

Contacts

For any questions regarding the general process, please contact:

Dr Simon Crook – 07590452940 (simon.crook@epsrc.ukri.org)

Dr Andrew Wright – (andrew.wright@epsrc.ukri.org)

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Simon Crook	14/9/20		Rewrote from draft