Industry Collaboration Fund: Proof of Concept Scheme

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Purpose of the Proof of Concept Scheme

Support for the very early stage of transforming research outputs into commercial opportunities

UKRI research can remain unexploited because a greater evidential base is required before companies or academics are able to commit to its further progress and application. Therefore, Industry Collaboration Funding (ICF) is available to support the development of an early evaluation prototype or 'demonstrator', initial trials in a particular field, or 'scoping exercises'. Such activities demonstrate the potential of the research and/or the 'commercial capability' of the academics involved.

The aims of the scheme are:

- To support the development of the evidential based required to enable the University or user organisations to commit to application/exploitation.
- To enable the University and user organisations to develop the necessary relationships that will deliver successful exploitation/application.
- To enable partners to plan longer term project

Funding for Proof of Concept projects is available via the BBSRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA), EPSRC IAA and the STFC IAA. Academics are encouraged to apply for co-funding from more than one of the Research Council accounts. For example, where a project is multidisciplinary and building on knowledge gained from both EPSRC and BBSRC funding, or whether EPSRC research is being exploited in the STFC domain.

Eligibility

Applications for the EPSRC and/or BBSRC IAA funding are only permitted for projects focused on the exploitation/application of knowledge or technology generated through EPSRC or BBSRC funded research. EPSRC and BBSRC IAA projects must also link to one or more of the EPSRC Themes or BBSRC Responsive Mode Priorities, respectively.

For STFC IAA funding, projects do not have to link back to previous STFC research, but they must meet and address at least one of the STFC Strategic Themes.

Eligible user organisations are UK-based businesses (or UK sites of international businesses), UK charities, and UK public sector organisations such as the NHS. Non-UK based businesses may be eligible where there is demonstrable evidence of the intention for inward investment during or beyond the lifetime of the project (e.g., establishing a UK site, job creation). If you have any queries regarding user organisation eligibility, please contact the Knowledge Exchange Team.

Partner organisations must sign up to the ICF Terms and Conditions attached to Appendix 1 of the application in advance of submission.

Funding Arrangements

Funding is intended for those projects where a company will contribute actively to the project through the direct provision of resources (including finance, facilities, equipment, consumables and technical expertise).

The ICF Knowledge Exchange Schemes Panel expects University staff to negotiate with the partner organisation a deal which minimises the support necessary from the IAA. The value to the partner and the University (in generating research publications, ongoing collaborations, IP etc.) must be considered.

Spend Completion Date

The EPSRC, BBSRC and STFC IAA awards to the University end on **31st March 2022** and no extensions will be permitted. Therefore, all ICF project spend must be completed by this date. Project Costs after IAA deadline cannot be covered by the ICF and must be covered by the partner organisation if the project end date surpasses March 2022.

Staff Costs

Due to the tight ICF deadline, all staff on the project must be named on the costing and application, including PDRAs. Applications that require the recruitment of staff will not be accepted as projects need to start by November 2021 to ensure that the ICF spend is within the deadline. The PDRA/ RA should be named on the first page of the application.

Costing and Eligible Costs

When costing the project, the Research Support team must ensure that there is enough company contribution to cover all project costs after 31st March 2022. The Knowledge Exchange team advise the Research support team to cost the project in two timeframes, e.g., 1st November 2021 – 31st March 2022 and April 2022 onwards so that the financial contribution needed from both the ICF and the partner is accurate. Please contact ke@manchester.ac.uk if you have any queries regarding the costing of ICF projects.

Proof of Concept projects are expected to be costed on a full Economic Costing basis. ICF funding can be used to cover the following:

Directly Incurred:	PDRA Costs **(must be named)**
	Equipment and Consumables (maximum £10k, with justification)
	Travel and Subsistence (maximum £5k, with justification)
	PDRA training and development (maximum £2k, with justification)
	Other costs as required (subject to approval from KE team, with justification)
Directly Allocated:	Investigator time (maximum 20%)
	Technician time (maximum 30%)

All Estates, Technician IS and Indirect costs are ineligible, and must be allocated as Department Sustainability.

pFACT costing report	EPSRC/BBSRC/STFC (depending on application) should be selected as the 'funder' with 100% fECd income template. This will ensure that inflation costs are included. To produce a "submission report" please use 'submission reports' 'project proposal details' and select 'income template rules'
Total Project Costs:	These are those costs directly associated with project, in the eligible cost headings outlined above. These should include all staff costs, estates, indirect costs, technician IS, travel and subsistence and consumables.
Company Contributions:	These are the direct (invoiceable) company contributions to the total project.
In-Kind Costs:	These may include staff time, access to equipment, provision of consumables.

A direct (invoiceable) company contribution is mandatory and is expected to be a **minimum of 10% of the ICF grant requested,** although the University's ICF Knowledge Exchange Schemes Panel will consider cases where there is clear justification for reduced / no direct contribution.

The maximum contribution from the ICF Proof of Concept funds towards the project costs is £35k.

Completing the Application Form

The Knowledge Exchange Team provide active support for the development of ICF submissions. Prior to submitting an application, academics are strongly advised to contact a member of the KE Team for support, and at least 1 month before the call closing date.

Section word limits are strict and should not be exceeded. If section word limits are surpassed by more than 10%, the application will be automatically rejected.

Applications are anonymised, therefore, please only include the names of academic project partners on the first page and signature page. Use the terms "PI", "Co-I" or "PDRA" throughout the text of the application.

Assessment of Applications

Applications will be assessed by the University's ICF Knowledge Exchange Schemes Panel. Applicants should remember to write their proposals for a non-specialist audience.

Assessment will consider:

- The benefits to the partner, the university, and the staff involved
- The likelihood that the project plans will deliver the expected outputs and benefits
- The contribution the University is expected to make relative to the partner (gearing)

Application Submission

Please note that applications will be evaluated by the KE team for content and eligibility before being

sent to the ICF KE Schemes Panel for consideration. **You are strongly advised to contact a member of the KE team (ke@manchester.ac.uk), for advice and guidance at least one month prior to submitting your application:**

KE Team

Mark Godber	Knowledge Exchange Manager	
	Email: Mark.Godber@manchester.ac.uk	
Joanne Summers	Knowledge Exchange Manager	
	Email: Joanne.Summers@manchester.ac.uk	
Caroline Stanton	Knowledge Exchange Manager	
	Email: Caroline.Stanton@manchester.ac.uk	

All projects should be costed (fEC) and input onto PURE by your Department Research Support Hub, prior to completion of the ICF application.

Completed applications should be submitted via email to:	Industry Collaboration Fund Knowledge Exchange Team Email: ke@manchester.ac.uk

Signed electronic submissions are acceptable, in PDF format. The correct application form must be used, if you are unsure whether you are using the most recent application form, please contact the KE team. A copy of the full-FEC pFACT costing report (or project budget sheet for applications from fBMH) must be submitted with your application along with evidence of Proposal Application Approval from the Head of Department (e.g. a screenshot of the approval on PURE or if applicable, a copy of the PanMan form), to confirm that the proposal is supported by your Department and is in line with Department policy for the costing of collaborative research projects. A signed letter of support from the collaborating partner should also be submitted with the application documents to confirm the company contribution.

Further information regarding the Industry Collaboration Funds can be found here.