# NERC Discipline Hopping – Guidance Document

## 1. Summary/Background

The aim of the call is to increase the inter- and multi-disciplinary capabilities of the researcher community in NERC relevant research areas. The fund provides financial support for new partnerships across disciplines through supporting short research placements (2-3 months). While the projects can and should involve academics at multiple career stages, the placements (discipline hops) should be made by Early Career Researcher (ECR) (i.e. PDRAs, fellows, junior academic staff).

The scheme will;

* Develop inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary research collaborations across the University to support research in one or more Sustainable Futures Platform Challenges and/or facilitate partnerships across our institutes that deliver environmental solutions;
* Facilitate the development of the next generation of environmental researchers by immersing them in environments which challenge traditional academic silos;
* Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in environmental research

## 2. Eligibility and criteria

* This call is open to all academics, including those who have not traditionally engaged in NERC-funded research, who wish to develop new collaborations in NERC-relevant areas of research.
* The projects must also align with one of the broad challenge areas within the new Sustainable Futures platform: Resilient Futures, Resourceful Futures, Net-zero Futures, Healthy Futures, Inclusive and Prosperous Futures. Further details can be found at:
  + <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/structure/institutes-platforms/sustainable-futures/>
* Applications must identify an Early Career Researcher (an individual employed in a non-permanent research position, or someone holding a fellowship or junior academic post who has less than 8 years of post-doctoral research experience) who has agreed to and will benefit from the discipline hop.
* Applications may request funds for research to accelerate and enhance a current interdisciplinary research collaboration but preference will be given to applications seeking to develop new relationships.
* Interdisciplinary collaboration is defined for this call as encompassing two or more academics based in different disciplines or distinct sub-fields within a broad discipline, as defined by the REF Subject Units of Assessment.
* Either the ECR or the placement host must be working in an area within the NERC research remit.
* Applications from ECRs seeking their own placements are encouraged providing that their line manager is supportive of the application
* Placements must be completed before 31st March

## 3. Eligible costs

Funding (at 100% FEC) may be requested to support the following:

* Extension to an existing postdoctoral contract for the specific purpose of completing the project output (expected to be 2-3 months);
* Travel and subsistence costs;
* Consumables.

Applications are invited for funding up to £40K, and we expect to make 3-8 awards. The panel reserve the right to modify the award amount to ensure the full amount of funds available can be used effectively

## 4. How to apply

To apply please complete the application form and submit by 9am 15 December to MERI@manchester.ac.uk

All members of the application team, including the current ECR supervisor (if the ECR is the applicant) and the host of the discipline hop, as well as the Head of the Organisational Unit hosting the researcher must approve the application.

A disciplinarily diverse panel consisting of members from the MERI management board, the Sustainable Futures management board and Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) leads will rank all applications.

Applications will be assessed on the quality of the proposal, the project description, the ambition and feasibility of the planned deliverables, the potential for delivering world-class research and/or impact, the opportunity for further development of the partnership, and the fit within the broad challenges of the Sustainable Futures Platform.

For further information, please contact [meri@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:meri@manchester.ac.uk)

## 5. Timeline

22 November – Call opens

15 December – Call closes

20 December – Outcome to applicants

4 January – Exchanges begin

31 March – Exchanges end

End March – Programme workshop

## 6. Successful applicants

Successful applicants will be informed by 20 December of the outcome of the applications. Exchanges should begin on 4 January, and so early conversations with HR partners regarding potential contract extensions are recommended. All funds must be spent by 31 March – there are no opportunities for extensions. All successful applicants agree to participate in a concluding workshop and complete a case study report about their experiences.