**STFC Impact Acceleration Account: Relationship Incubator Scheme**

**Guidance Notes for Applicants**

**Purpose of the Relationship Incubator Scheme**

***Fostering new relationships between industry and academic researchers, creating opportunities for collaboration and exchange of knowledge and skills***

STFC research can often remain unexploited because of a lack of engagement with industry partners that can support the exploration of potential applications and / or exploitation pathways. The scheme aims to overcome the ‘market understanding - innovation awareness’ and relationship barriers by supporting academic researchers to flexibility engage with industry to identify opportunities for longer-term, impactful, collaboration.

The aims of the scheme are:

* To support the exploration of exploitation opportunities for the University’s EPSRC research portfolio to highlight areas for industry collaboration
* To enable academics to learn about industrial research priorities and models of engagement
* To highlight to industry the research expertise and facilities available to support the generation of impact

**Eligibility**

Applications are only permitted for projects focused on the exploitation / application of knowledge or technology generated through STFC-funded research. Projects must also meet and address at least one of the [STFC Strategic Themes](https://stfc.ukri.org/files/corporate-publications/strategic-context/).

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.

**Funding Arrangements**

**Given the early nature of Relationship Incubator projects, a direct (invoiceable) company contribution is not mandatory. The maximum IAA grant contribution will be £10k.**

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 STFC IAA 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.

**Costing and Eligible Costs**

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

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| **Directly Incurred:** | PDRA Costs Equipment and Consumables (maximum £2k, with justification)Travel and Subsistence (maximum £5k, 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.**

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| **pFACT costing report** | 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. |

**Completing the Application Form**

The Knowledge Exchange Team provide active support for the development of IAA 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 STFC IAA 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 STFC IAA 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**

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| Mark Godber  | Knowledge Exchange ManagerEmail: Mark.Godber@manchester.ac.uk |
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| Joanne Summers | Knowledge Exchange ManagerEmail: Joanne.Summers@manchester.ac.uk |
| Caroline Stanton | Knowledge Exchange ManagerEmail: 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 STFC IAA application.

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| **Completed applications should be submitted via email to**: | STFC Impact Acceleration AccountKnowledge 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 KE Schemes can be found [here](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/beke/knowledge-exchange/).