



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council

# NERC and UKRI Funding Opportunities

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# Natural Environment Research Council

- NERC is the UK's largest public funder of environmental science
- We invest £330M each year in cutting-edge research, postgraduate training and innovation in UK universities and research centres
- For more information see: [NERC remit](#) and [Research Areas](#)



# NERC Priority Themes



## Environmental Solutions

- Champion the importance of environmental solutions in contributing to clean growth across UKRI, and create initiatives that meet this aim



## Resilient Environment

- Increase understanding of environmental hazards, environmental change and their interactions, to plan for and manage vulnerability, risk, response and recovery



## Productive Environment

- Promote research and innovation to enable a shift to a circular, resource-efficient economy, working with partners to translate research into effective business models



## Healthy Environment

- Increase understanding of the benefits of a healthy environment to health and wellbeing, and of feedback mechanisms between environmental systems and a healthy economy, society and culture

# NERC Priority Themes



## Pushing the frontiers of understanding

- Maintain the UK's considerable breadth of expertise across environmental science, to prepare for the unknown challenges of the future



## Global Environment

- Provide leadership in, and bring UK expertise to bear on, global challenges, aiding international development and responses to environmental emergencies



## Digital Environment

- Use cutting-edge technology to advance environmental outcomes, taking advantage of machine learning, miniaturisation, battery technology and wireless communications



## Best Environment for R&I

- Ensure a talent pipeline in environmental science that has the skills and expertise to resolve future unknown challenges and to lead and influence broad, systemic thinking for environmental solutions

# NERC and UKRI Funding schemes



# Discovery Science: Standard & Large Grants

## NERC Standard Grants (open across NERC remit)

- Curiosity-driven research, addressing clearly-defined scientific questions.
- Up to £800K projects.

Recent closing date for [Standard Grants](#): 14 January 2020, next tbc.

## NERC Large Grants (open across NERC remit)

- Supports adventurous, large-scale and complex research.
- Up to 5 year large research projects larger than £1.2 million.

Next closing date for [Large Grant](#) outlines anticipated March 2020

NERC urgency grants (across NERC remit) allow scientists to respond rapidly to unexpected and transient events affecting the environment

# Strategic research and innovation

## i. Strategic programme areas

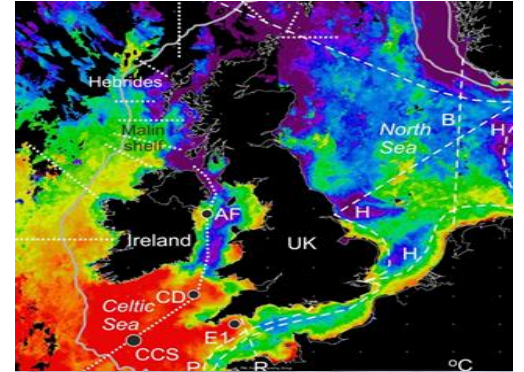
Large scale complex programmes that take time to develop and deliver. Typically range in size from £5m to £20m depending on their scope and partnership funding.

## ii. Highlight topics

Focus strategic research on defined topic areas. Can be worth up to £4m and last up to four years.

## iii. Partnerships and Opportunity

Provides a timely response to opportunities for NERC to partner with other research funders. Size and scope will vary according to the opportunity.



# Generating strategic R&I programmes

## Generate ideas

NERC DP ambitions vs existing portfolio – gap analysis, Council priorities

Partnerships and opportunities – Executive engage and shape

Open portal for ideas – ‘Crowd-sourcing’?



## NERC strategic R&I budget

- Strategic R&I programmes
  - AO based on Council priorities (Exec)
  - Assess proposals (Science Committee)
- Highlight topics (Science Committee)
- Partnerships & opportunities (Exec)



## UKRI collective funds

- Open call for SPF prog ideas (Exec)
- Generate programme proposal then business case to UKRI (Exec plus ‘rotators’)



# Highlight Topics

## NERC invites proposals for highlight topics.

- Strategic research on defined areas. Highlight topics in recent round include:
  - Understanding and predicting the cross-ecosystem impacts of insect decline on ecosystem services and natural capital
  - Achieving net environmental gain and resilient ecosystems in the UK
- Highlight Topics will be delivered through independent projects up to 4 years in duration (up to £2M).
- Anticipating a seventh call for highlight topic ideas launching Spring 2020

Notification of Intent deadline for [Highlight Topics](#): 4pm, 20 February 2020

# Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF)

- Multi-disciplinary programmes
- National strategic priorities, eg AI, synthetic biology
- Programmes aligned with Government Departments and cross-departmental R&I priorities



# Landscape Decisions Fellowships

UKRI is inviting fellowship proposals through the Landscape Decisions Programme.

- 12-24 month fellowships, full or part-time
- Open to any career stage post PhD.
- Invites fellowships in *research synthesis*, *research translation* and *community engagement research*

Deadline for [Landscape Decisions Fellowship](#) proposals: 4pm, 26 March 2020



# Call for Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) Ideas

**NERC is seeking ideas that could form the basis of future SPF bids.**

- Ideas welcomed from all parts of the environmental science community, including academics, businesses, policymakers, NGOs and others.
- Ideas should have a strong environmental science component.
- NERC staff are available to discuss potential ideas

The opportunity for NERC to bid for an SPF programme is only likely to arise following a spending review, but ideas are being sought now to allow for early identification and development of potential programme proposals.

For more information, please see: [NERC call for future SPF ideas](#)

# Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF)

- Launched 2017 following Industrial Strategy white paper
- Industry led, Grand Challenge focus:
  - Clean Growth
  - Artificial Intelligence & Data Economy
  - Ageing Society
  - Future of Mobility
- Wave 1 - £485m & Wave 2 - £725m
- Wave 3 – Up to £500m: 9 shortlisted bids:
  - **Industrial decarbonisation (£170m)**
  - Manufacturing made smarter (£121m)
  - **Smart Sustainable plastic packaging (£60m) – NERC led call open with a closing date of 17 March 2020 for outline proposals**
- Wave 4?



# Strength in Places Fund

- Launched in 2018
- Competitive £115m UKRI Fund (in partnership with devolved funding bodies). Run by UKRI team
- Collaborations between universities, research organisations, businesses, local government and LEPs in England and relevant agencies in devolved nations.
- Demonstrate strong impact on local productivity

# Innovate UK Catapult Centres

A network of centres with world-leading technical capabilities

- Requires a sustained investment – from both public and private sector
- a critical mass of activity surrounding them which will anchor the activities of globally mobile companies in the UK
- Funds from a mix of competitively earned commercial funding and core Innovate UK investment.
- Each Catapult is a company limited by guarantee (CLG), a separate legal entity from Innovate UK and independent from each other. They are controlled by their own Boards with an Executive Management team responsible for the day-to-day management of each Catapult.

# NERC working with you

- To facilitate and convene – help you to access the science
- To listen – what solutions can science help you deliver?
- To respond – help inform future R&I programmes

.....over to you!





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# Thank you

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