IDRIC Impact Accelerator Fund: Call document

Summary

Impact Accelerator: realising further impact from IDRIC's Wave 1 and 2 projects

The fund allows existing IDRIC projects to bid for additional funding carry out further work that enhances the impact of their IDRIC-funded research within the industrial clusters.

You must:

- be a named researcher on a IDRIC Wave 1 or 2 research project
- be able to demonstrate clear industry or end user endorsement of your proposal
- be based at a UK organisation eligible for funding
- meet individual eligibility criteria
- be able to deliver the work between now and 15 February 2024

Projects can be up to £30,000 at 100% full economic cost (fEC). We will fund 80% of the eligible full economic cost (fEC). The total fund available is £200,000 at 100% fEC

Project duration will depend on need – however all projects must be completed by 15 February 2024 (to allow necessary administrative and impact collection activities to take place before end March 2024). Projects from 1 up to 9 months are envisaged, but other lengths can be considered as appropriate for the proposed work.

Contents

1. Who can apply

Standard UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) eligibility rules apply and 'Terms and Conditions' of the overall Grant will be flowed down to projects. Research grants are open to:

- UK higher education institutions
- research council institutes
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations
- eligible public sector research establishments

Check if your institution is eligible for funding

1.1. Individual eligibility

To apply you must be a named researcher on a IDRIC Wave 1 or 2 research project

You can apply if you are a resident in the UK and meet at least one of the conditions below:

- are employed at the submitting research organisation at the time of application.
- hold a UKRI, Royal Society, Royal Academy of Engineering or similar fellowship.
- hold fellowships under other schemes (please contact IDRIC to check eligibility, which is considered on a case-by-case basis).

A researcher may only propose to lead one bid to this rolling call; however, they may be included as co-investigators on other project proposals.

It is possible for Early Career Researchers to apply for an EPSRC grant under this call, as the lead investigator.

2. What we're looking for

IDRIC forms part of the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge and is funded by UKRI. IDRIC is designed as a multidisciplinary research and innovation programme, which currently does not exist at the scale required to accelerate the decarbonisation of industrial clusters in the UK. Through multidisciplinary research aimed at reducing costs, risks, timescales and emissions, and cross-cutting activities such as policy, economic, institutional and regulatory analysis, and knowledge exchange, it seeks to protect and bolster the UK's competitive advantage and ability to capture value. IDRIC aims to address the challenges faced by industrial clusters through its research and policy development functions, stimulating cross learning between clusters and providing a strong evidence base allowing them to make informed decisions about future decarbonisation options, policies and institutional reforms.

IDRIC has launched a £2M Flexible Fund, intended to be responsive to the research and impact needs of the clusters. £200,000 of this fund has been allocated to this Impact Accelerator Fund, available for Wave 1 and Wave 2 IDRIC projects to deliver further impact in the clusters.

2.1. Scope

Recognising that exciting opportunities to have impact can become apparent whilst research is being conducted, this allocation of the Flexible Funding will allow projects to respond proactively to these opportunities.

The fund allows existing Wave 1 and Wave 2 projects to bid for additional funding (up to a maximum of £30,000) to carry out further work that enhances the impact of their IDRIC-funded research within the industrial clusters.

Examples of the types of activities this fund can support include (but are not limited to):

- Activities to accelerate potential and credible pathways in implementation of tools, products, services, processes and/or technologies that will be of value to the cluster(s). This includes exploring commercialisation opportunities.

- Activities to engage broader audiences, outside initial collaborating partners, with project outputs. For example, with another cluster where research findings are of benefit.

- Activities to further disseminate research and outputs in a targeted way, such as; deeper engagement with clusters, workshops and conferences, media consultancy, production of websites or new resources.

- Activities to respond to a policy development through engagement with relevant policy actors.

Please note, this impact accelerator funding is **not** to be focused on further research.

> We encourage applications that exploit impact synergies between existing IDRIC projects, bringing together their outputs in an integrated way, and strategically implementing joint activities to accelerate impact.

To enable responsiveness to cluster needs, the call for funds will be implemented in a rolling process, i.e. it is possible to submit a call to the fund at any point after the general opening date for assessment, until the call closes. It is expected that academic partners will have already engaged in discussions with relevant industry partners or end users before making an application and have secured support for their proposal and a commitment to engage with the proposed activities.

In the first instance, there will be no restriction on the types of impact acceleration activities which can be applied for. The call document may be updated at any time to reflect emerging needs.

2.2. Funding & Duration

2.2.1. Proposal expectations

The maximum grant award for the Impact Accelerator is £30,000; however, we welcome proposals for smaller projects as appropriate for the work. Due to the end date of the IDRIC Centre funding (end March 2024), the project can finish NO LATER than 15 February 2024. We anticipate that projects will be from 1 up to 9 months in duration; however, other lengths can be considered as appropriate for the proposed work.

Funding is available for the following:

- One lead investigator

- Co-investigators

- Research assistants

- Consumables

- Equipment (under £10,000), see https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/

- Travel (to cover both project specific travel and for attending centrally organised IDRIC events and workshops)

- Academic project partners (where 80% fEC costs would be supported by the award) – however please consider carefully whether it is feasible to include partners, especially for shorter or smaller awards.

- Non-academic project partners may be considered for funding if there is a clear justification, but this is expected to be appropriate only in exceptional cases. There are specific rules regarding eligibility in this case, therefore, please contact us (info@idric.org) at your earliest opportunity to see if any partners you are considering are eligible. Please, also be aware that such costs may have to be reimbursed by the lead organisation at 100% OR a co-finance model agreed with that partner.

- Non-academic technical services may be considered for funding, such as delivering a workshop, design items (images, videos etc), which may be more relevant for the impact acceleration proposals. Please also be aware that costs may have to be reimbursed by the lead organisation at 100%.

2.2.2. Responsible innovation and including international collaborators

Responsible Innovation is a process that seeks to promote creativity and opportunities for science and innovation that are socially desirable and undertaken in the public interest.

Innovation is a collective responsibility where funders, researchers, and interested and affected parties, including the public, all have an important role to play.

Applicants are expected to consider responsible innovation during planning and throughout the duration of their project and to work within the EPSRC Framework for Responsible Innovation.

International collaborators can be involved in the work and we would encourage applicants to ensure that they would build their work on existing research from across the global research community where feasible. However, it will not be possible to provide direct funding to international collaborators.

3. How to apply

3.1. Full proposal (7 pages)

A template, available from the fund webpage, has been developed for you to complete and submit your proposal. Information will be required under the following headings:

3.1.1. General Information (proforma sections – NOT within the 7 page limit)
We will require the following general information included in the relevant sections of the template.

- Project Title
- Proposed start date
- Duration of the project (months)
- Project PI
- Main Contact Organisation
- School/Department
- Total cost (100% fEC)

3.1.2. Case for support (4 pages)
The case for support should describe the proposed impact acceleration activities and their intended outcomes. It should cover the context, importance, methodology and all the associated work and activities you propose to carry out that will make this a high-quality impact acceleration project. This document is the principal opportunity to explain to reviewers why this proposal should be financially supported. Please note that page limits are a MAXIMUM and we request that information provided is proportional to the amount of funds being requested.

The case for support will require the following information:

- Short summary (250 words) – to be made publicly available if funded.
- Background and objectives.
- Evidence that the planned activities are led by an opportunity to have impact within one or more of the clusters and that this opportunity has arisen over the course of the original project e.g. responding to a specific policy development affecting the clusters, or a request from a cluster(s) of relevance to engage further with an initial output.
- How the project relates to your current IDRIC project(s).
- Clarification for why the proposed activities were not included in the original Wave 1 or Wave 2 grant proposal.
- Clarification of which IDRIC projects are involved (if this is a collaborative endeavour) and how each project will contribute.
- List of project partners and short statement on the planned commitment and involvement of each (to demonstrate expected impact).
- Planned impact in the clusters, including confirmation of commitment to explore the outcomes of the work within at least one cluster.
- Description of how your project will contribute positively to the UK's overall ambitions to decarbonise the industrial clusters

- Justification for why this additional funding for the project will represent value for money in the long-term.
- Data sharing and IP considerations.
- Description of activities proposed, linking to the Gantt chart and project deliverables, milestones and KPIs.
- Risk management (1/2 page maximum for a risk register table plus narrative).
- Equality, Diversion and Inclusion (EDI), including how you have implemented EDI considerations in your proposal and (if relevant) team as well as through the delivery of the work.

Proposed impact in the clusters

It is crucial that the project proposed has been developed with a view to its impact on decarbonising the UK industrial clusters and that it demonstrates this potential in the proposal. The work should reflect an emerging and urgent need within one of the UK clusters. Impact must be integral to the proposal, not an add-on activity. Please focus on providing the following information:

- Describe how your planned approaches and activities within the project will *accelerate* or *create* impact.
- Summarise what the impacts and the outcomes of the activities will be
- Identify beneficiaries of the project activities (including which of the seven clusters). If you have letters of support from these beneficiaries, you should still include this description in your narrative in this section.
- Describe the planned commitment and involvement of industry (or other industry-relevant end-users of the research) in the project. Even if these commitments are included in letters for support, their engagement should still be justified clearly in this section.
- Describe when impacts will be realised, how you plan to capture and demonstrate this; and
- Describe how any other relevant stakeholders will be engaged.

Please note is it not necessary for a stakeholder or beneficiary of the impact to be a partner in the project; however, it is important to elaborate on how you will engage with stakeholders, if this is a new or existing relationship, and/or who the users of the work will be and how. The information provided in your proposal should include a summary of any letters of support received and how this support adds value (see section 3.1.6 for more detail).

Where a stakeholder or beneficiary (i.e. including potential industry or end user partners in the clusters) is involved as a partner to the project, please demonstrate clearly how they will aid in the delivery of the work and if they are providing an in-kind or in-cash contribution.

3.1.3. Project delivery plan (1 page)
Gantt chart and associated narrative outlining the activities, linking to the text in the case for support.

3.1.4. Project deliverables, milestones and KPIs (1 page)
One page maximum which outlines the intended deliverables, milestones and KPIs including dates. Note that the number of deliverables, milestones and KPIs should be proportional to the size of funds requested. A compulsory deliverable is an end of project report.

3.1.5. Costings & Justification of Resources (1 page)

This section of the template will ask for more detailed information on the resource needs to support the work and justification for the inclusion of each item. Please follow EPSRC guidelines for allowable costs and use Full Economic Costing (fEC): https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/ . Projects can be up to £30,000 at 100% full economic cost, we will fund 80% of the full economic eligible costs.

Please, note the following when you consider planning your resources:

- If your project is 6 months or more in duration, please include a minimum of £500 of your budget for travel and subsistence to attend centrally organised IDRIC meetings AS WELL AS any costs for travel and subsistence specifically needed to deliver the project.

- equipment over £10,000 in value (inc. vat) **is not available through this call**. Smaller items of equipment (individually under £10,000) should be in the Directly Incurred - Other Costs heading. For more information on equipment funding, please see: https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/

- The addition of project Co-Investigators is at the discretion of the project PI and this will need to be justified.

- The work of all project Co-Investigators will be coordinated, overseen and administered by the project PI. The funds allocated to the project shall similarly be administered by the project PI. As above, please consider carefully when to include additional organisations to deliver (and be paid for) the work, especially for smaller or shorter projects

- It will be the responsibility of the project PI to provide reports on a quarterly basis (or for projects shorter than one quarter, at relevant intervals agreed with IDRIC) on activity, as well as liaising with their relevant finance contacts to provide narrative in relation to quarterly finance reports.

3.1.6. Letters of support

Supporting letters could be from either those planned to be directly involved/engaged with during the work or those expected to directly benefit from the outcomes or impact derived from the project.

Supporting letters can be used to demonstrate the following:

- **Project partner support during the project**: Inclusion of a project partner, i.e. an organisation which is integral to an applicant's plans, the letter could therefore demonstrate the project partner's commitment to delivering the aims of the proposal, including proposed in-kind or cash co-finance.

- **Stakeholder engagement support during the project**: Demonstrate where stakeholders are already engaged and on-board with your plans for dissemination and impact during the project duration

- **Expectation of user need:** Evidence of the potential impact of the project, i.e. the value from a user perspective

If included, project partner supporting letters must be signed, dated (no more than six months before the opportunity closing date) and on letterheaded paper. They should be up to one page in length each.

Where you are including letters of support, the key offers of support and endorsements for the project should be highlighted in the case for support as well (Section 3.1.2).

4. How we will assess your application

4.1. Application process

A bi-monthly deadline for the submission of proposals to each 'round' will be set (i.e. one round per every other month). Call deadlines will be highlighted on the IDRIC website.

However, if an applicant makes a strong case that they are responding to a time-sensitive opportunity and application process timelines do not fit with their needs, we will assess the proposal outside the normal timelines. Applicants should email info@idric.org to discuss their proposal first if this is the case.

4.2. Assessment process and criteria

Once submitted, proposals will be initially reviewed by the IDRIC Knowledge Exchange Manager for eligibility and fit to call. Those deemed eligible, will be reviewed in full by the IDRIC Knowledge Exchange Manager and three other assessors, drawn from academia and industry. The pool of assessors will be sourced from the Academic Cluster Leads (ACLs), the IDRIC Stakeholder Group (ISG) and the IDRIC Independent Advisory Board (IAB). A process to avoid conflict of interest will be included. If a proposal is deemed out of scope of the expertise of this pool of assessors, then additional relevant assessors may be sought.

The proposals will be assessed against the criteria outlined below. The reviews will then be compiled and then sent to Management Board (MB) for final proposal recommendation.

It is the intention for the review and award process to take no longer than 6 weeks from the closing date of the application round.

Criterion	Weighting	Indicators
Quality of proposed activities	30%	Relevant indicators include: • Ambition and innovation • Appropriateness of activities • Expertise and track record • Breadth and depth of consortium • Achievability in the timeframe available • Clear justification for why these activities were not included in the original proposal • Depth and relevance of collaboration between IDRIC projects (if this is a joint endeavour)
Industrial Cluster Decarbonisation Impact, including responsiveness to emerging need	50%	Relevant indicators include: • Impact and relevance of the project to the UK industrial clusters • An emergent or timely opportunity • Engagement with industry and other stakeholders and/or users • Relevance of non-academic project partners

		• Supporting letters demonstrating one or more of the following:
		   ○ Project partner support during the project (including in-kind or in-cash funding)
		   ○ Stakeholder engagement support during the project
		   ○ Expectation of user need
		• Impact of proposed stakeholder engagement and embedding of impact in the proposal
		• Likelihood of the impact being realised
		• Potential for acceleration of impact from original project
		• Planned activities are a viable response to an impact opportunity which has arisen over course of original project

Resources & Management	20%	Relevant indicators include: • Effectiveness of the proposed planning and management • Management of risk • Value for money, including appropriateness and affordability of the estimated resources • Consideration of EDI

4.3. Proposal selection for award

The Management Board (MB) will then review the list of proposals for selection and award. The Management Board (MB) will make the final selection of proposals to be awarded in relation to the available funds for that round, taking into account both the fund target for ECR led projects, the ranked project scores, and whether there is a time critical nature to the delivery of the work.

This may mean that in some cases, proposals which met the minimum threshold for recommendation for award, are not then selected. In this case, the proposers have the right to re-submit the proposal to the next round, for reconsideration at the selection stage, but please note that there is no obligation for IDRIC to fund that proposal in the next round.

If an application was unsuccessful but reviewers believe the project has potential, applicants will be given the opportunity to improve their proposal and re-apply to the fund. Applicants must demonstrate they have taken reviewers' feedback on board in their re-submission. Applicants should be aware there is still no obligation for IDRIC to fund their proposal and that they can only re-submit their proposal to the fund once, if invited.

4.4. Feedback

Feedback will be provided on request, consisting of reviewers' comments.

5. Contact details

If you have any queries about the fund, email info@idric.org