



NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellowships

Closing date	2 nd December 2020
Funding available	Total Call Budget - £1.5m KE Fellowships cover up to 100% of the Fellow's salary on a pro-rata basis including superannuation, NI and specific allowances, plus up to £40,000 for travel and other associated costs. They cover direct costs only and do not include overheads. There is no budget limit for salary costs. Applicants can apply for Travel and Subsistence costs for stakeholders to attend meetings/events. However, applicants cannot pay them to attend, i.e. meeting attendance fees.
Funding mode/stream	Talent and Skills: Fellowships
NERC Core or UKRI/Collective Fund budget	NERC Core
Project duration	Awards range from one - three years
Funding partners (if applicable)	N/A
Start date requirements (if applicable)	Latest project start date: 31 July 2021
Call aims and objectives	<p>Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellowships are intended to enable the sharing and flow of knowledge and expertise between environmental science researchers and their stakeholders, partners and/or user communities with the aim of generating impact from NERC remit research in the priority areas detailed in the NERC delivery plan.</p> <p>KE Fellows can work anywhere between 20% and 100% of their time on a work plan of their own choosing to generate impact from NERC remit research. Applicants should fully justify their choice of %FTE requested. The KE Fellow must be employed by a host institution for the duration of their fellowship, including any time the Fellow spends embedded with another organisation.</p>
Eligibility criteria	Applicants can either hold a position where they would be eligible to apply as a Principal or Co-investigator for a grant and would generally be expected to apply for the KE Fellowship for a percentage of their FTE only. Applicants can be at an earlier career stage and not yet be eligible as a PI/Co-I for NERC grants, but may apply for up to 100% of their time through this fellowship. Research Organisation eligibility rules are in Section C of the NERC research grant and fellowships handbook .
Studentship or Training Opportunities	N/A
Contact	Fellowships@nerc.ukri.org



**Natural
Environment
Research Council**

Knowledge Exchange Fellowships

Announcement of Opportunity

Issued on 4th October 2020

Proposals deadline: 4pm on 2nd December 2020

1. Background

Tackling complex problems demands both a deep understanding of environmental science and a whole-systems approach, with a broad, diverse research community engaged so that research and innovation are key factors in delivering the solutions society needs.

The science funded by NERC can make important contributions beyond academia through its effect on, change or benefit to the following, as defined by the [Research Excellence Framework \(REF\) definition](#) of impact:

- Economy
- Society
- Culture
- Public policy or services
- Health
- Environment
- Quality of life

Creating opportunities for people and organisations to discuss, create and participate in research and innovation is an important way to achieve a more productive, resilient, healthy and sustainable society. A recent Carnegie UK Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation study asserted that “Academic research is the most trusted, but least used, source of evidence by policy makers and practitioners”¹. This is often the case with respect to exchange between academic research and private industry also. KE Fellowship are designed to facilitate sustained, impactful interactions between researchers and their stakeholders, partners and/or user communities, through the development of projects and partnerships to translate and increase the impact of research outcomes.

For the UK to continue to be a global leader in environmental science, scientific advances need to be translated swiftly into a form that stakeholders, partners and/or user communities

¹ Shucksmith, M (2016) *InterAction How can academics and the third sector work together to influence policy and practice* CarnegieUK Trust, p. 7

https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/04/LOW-RES-2578-Carnegie-Interaction.pdf

can absorb and use – this includes businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government and public groups. These groups could also be engaged early in the research process in co-production which can increase evidence use compared with dissemination; or involved in the research process itself.

2. Scope

NERC Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellowships are intended to enable the sharing, flow and translation of knowledge and expertise between the NERC remit researchers and their stakeholders, partners and/or user communities.

Applicants can propose their own programme of work in any area across the NERC remit. Applicants should shape their proposals around one or more of the priority areas outlined in NERC's delivery plan:

- Environmental solutions
- Productive environment
- Healthy environment
- Resilient environment
- Digital environment
- Global environment

Applications for KE Fellowships should focus on accelerating and amplifying impact throughout the cycle of research, by engaging and working with stakeholders, partners, industry, and/or user communities and business intermediaries. Impact is defined according to the REF definition as “an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia”.

Approaches could include:

- strengthening existing partnerships with stakeholders;
- developing new relationships that lead to collaborative projects;
- public engagement as a fundamental part of translating research outcomes into practice;
- identification of the knowledge needs of business, NGOs and policy makers;
- researching new market opportunities for the exploitation of research outcomes; and
- providing briefings and reports suitable for policymakers and business users.

3. Programme requirements

KE Fellowships can be focused on any theme/activity arising from NERC remit research and proposals from applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds are encouraged. It is understood that in some cases a mix of funding will lead to an opportunity to generate impact. The applicant should have the committed support of the Head of Department or School and an enthusiasm for knowledge exchange should be apparent through the application.

3.1 Programme funding

3.1.1 Examples of activities that may be supported:

Below are some examples of the type of activities that may be supported, but other approaches are welcome.

- Developing relationships, for example with business. These could be developed with the aim of interpreting their environmental science needs, demonstrating the potential offered by the latest research or developing an exchange of resources – these can be non-cash based.
- Spending time embedded within a host organisation (e.g. national government departments, local government, third sector and private organisations) gaining understanding of their needs; working with them on translating research into tools.
- Public engagement. Developing and delivering effective partnership working.
- Planning and delivering engagement, including with the public, considering the purpose, people involved, process of engagement, and how you will evaluate the work.
- Data development. Substantial amounts of data are generated from research and often published in ways that are not easily available or meaningful to potential users. The KE Fellows could be employed to develop data into meaningful outputs, such as for businesses to use.
- Convening meetings and workshops of stakeholders and/or expert advisors (e.g. NGOs, government and the private sector) to exchange skills and techniques and to provide input to design or delivery of the work.
- KE translators/facilitators. Leading as a facilitator to move between the research base and the user community to act as a focal point for a range of activities to improve knowledge exchange can be useful. In some cases it may be essential to help businesses define the questions that they want to ask academics.
- Technology commercialisation activities. These will still be undertaken by the host institution. KE Fellows may assist in identifying and championing potential commercial products.

3.1.2 Ineligible activities

KE Fellowships should not be used to support:

- Activity that is solely for the purpose of knowledge exchange between different sections of the academic research base
- Consultancy
- Provision of external training
- Activities which are not free at the point of access for public audiences
- Impact generating activity which is not linked to NERC research
- Generic public engagement with science (not research).

3.2 Implementation and delivery

KE Fellows can work anywhere between 20% and 100% of their time on a work plan of their own choosing to generate impact from NERC remit research. Applicants should fully justify their choice of %FTE requested. KE fellowships can last for 1 to 3 years and will cover 100% of the Fellow's salary on a pro-rata basis including superannuation, NI and specific allowances, plus up to £40,000 for travel and other associated costs. They cover direct costs only and do not include overheads. There is no budget limit for salary costs.

Applicants can apply for Travel and Subsistence costs for stakeholders to attend meetings/events. However, applicants cannot pay them to attend, i.e. meeting attendance fees.

3.3 Data management

The [NERC Data Policy](#) must be adhered to, and an [outline data management plan](#) produced as part of proposal development. As data sets may include information from engagement activities with members of the public, NERC can help to make arrangements for these to be managed in an appropriate data centre. NERC will pay the data centre directly on behalf of the programme for archival and curation services, but applicants should ensure they request sufficient resource to cover preparation of data for archiving by the research team.

3.4 NERC Facilities

It is not expected that KE Fellowships will require NERC facilities. If the applicant wishes to use a NERC service or facility they should contact the NERC fellowships team to discuss before submitting an application, in addition to following the usual facilities requirements.

3.5 Programme management

NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellows are required to operate as part of a network of NERC funded Fellows. Successful applicants will be expected to link with other NERC KE Fellows to share best practice and to participate in NERC Fellows events. Current KE Fellows are listed on the KE Fellows webpage.

3.6 Sustainability

Proposals should also consider the sustainability of the project (although this will not be part of the formal assessment criteria) in-line with [NERC's approach](#). Sustainability focused on creating and nurturing an environment and culture in which social, economic and environmental responsibility is embedded, balancing the needs of the NERC community and our stakeholders, including immediate needs and those of future generations.

3.7 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

When planning KE Fellow activities, applicants should actively consider how they will address specific needs in the context equality, diversity and inclusion and underrepresented group. This should align with the key legal requirements underpinning this important area of consideration. Applicants should:

- Ensure engagement and KE Fellowship plans address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Ensure consideration of imagery used in activities that they develop ensuring it is diverse and inclusive, so that the public and external stakeholders see environmental science as an inclusive, welcoming community; and
- Consider the accessibility needs of people they work with to ensure that everyone who wants to is able to engage with NERC engagement activity e.g. wheelchair accessibility of venues, subtitles, British Sign Language (BSL) translation where appropriate, timing of events with respect to travel for those with caring commitments.

More information about [NERC's EDI approach](#) can be found online.

3.8 Reporting requirements

Successful applicants will be required to report research outcomes on ResearchFish in line with standard [UKRI Terms and Conditions](#). This is required annually and continues for up to five years post grant end.

Successful projects are required to submit a Final Expenditure Statement. NERC reserves the right to make ad hoc requests for other reports as necessary. Fellows should inform NERC when they identify knowledge needs of business, NGOs and policy makers that have been fed into UKRI-NERC future strategy development and funding opportunities (such as Highlight Topics / SPF Ideas process).

4. Application process

4.1 How to apply

Closing Date: 4pm 2nd December 2020

Full proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). Applicants should select Proposal Type – 'Standard Proposal'; Document Type – 'Standard Proposal'; Scheme – 'Innovation People' and the Call – 'Knowledge Exchange Fellowships (KE DEC20)'.

The Knowledge Exchange Fellowship call will close on Je-S at 4pm on 2nd December 2020 and it will not be possible to submit to the call after this time. Applicants should leave enough time for their proposal to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before this date. Any proposal that is incomplete, or does not meet NERC's eligibility criteria or follow NERC's submission rules (see [NERC Grants Handbook](#)), will be office rejected and will not be considered.

All attachments, with the exception of letters of support and services/facilities/equipment quotes, submitted through the Je-S system must be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them.

Applicants should ensure that their proposal conforms to all eligibility and submission rules, otherwise their proposal may be rejected without peer review. More details on NERC's submission rules can be found in the [NERC research grant and fellowships handbook](#) and in the [submission rules](#) on the NERC website.

Proposals for this call should be submitted following the requirements outlined in Section F of the [NERC research grant and fellowships handbook](#).

Please note that on submission to council ALL non-PDF documents are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

Additionally, where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc), the document should be converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal.

No associated studentships can be requested under this call.

The expected start date for projects funded under this Announcement of Opportunity is 31st July 2021.

4.2 Notes on completing the J-es form

- **Project Details**

Project Title - State that you are applying for an KE Fellowship in the title.

- **Fellow Details**

KE Fellowships are awarded 100% of costs with no provision for overheads.

- **Beneficiaries**

Identify the key stakeholders, partners and/or user communities you will interact with and will benefit from your programme of work and what impacts this may generate (see details above). You should consider how your project will enhance the impact of the NERC remit science related to the wider community. Think about how you will connect with the most suitable stakeholders to generate impact in terms of reach (how widely the impact has been felt) and/or significance (how much difference was made to the beneficiaries) (as described by the [Research Excellence Framework](#)).

- **Resources**

Tick the Exceptions box. Costs will be funded at 100% Direct Costs. These KE Fellowships will cover the KE Fellow's salary including superannuation, NI and specific allowances, plus up to £40k for travel and other associated work plan costs. The award does not cover overheads.

- **Attachments**

The only attachments we require are:

- **Case for support** – outline your ideas of how you will undertake this role (4 sides A4 max)
- **CV** – please attach your CV (2 sides A4 max)
- **Justification of Resources** – (2 sides A4 max) explain why you need funds for activities making reference to your project objectives.

- **Head of Department Statement** – (2 sides A4 max) It is helpful for the selection panel if the HoD's statement can explain where the KE Fellow would fit into broader university department or school KE objectives and existing partnerships. It does not necessarily need to be the HoD, someone who can give a strategic viewpoint will also be suitable. This supporting person may need to attend the interview with the applicant or be available at the end of a phone.
- **Work plan** – Outline the timeline for carrying out the fellowship (2 sides A4 max).
- **Letters of Support** – Upload letters of support. These need to be from organisations who are offering support in cash or support in kind and who will be engaged in the programme of work. It is not the number of letters but the quality of the letters that the panel are looking for.

4.3 Eligibility

Applicants can either hold a position where they would be eligible to apply as a Principal or Co-investigator for a grants and would generally be expected to apply for the KE fellowship for a percentage of their FTE only. Or applicants could be at an earlier career stage and not yet be eligible as a PI/Co-I for NERC grants, but may apply for up to 100% of their time through this fellowship. Research Organisation eligibility rules are in Section C of the [NERC research grant and fellowships handbook](#).

Proposals from applicants with diverse backgrounds and experience are encouraged, and there are no limits on amount of postdoctoral experience.

NERC research and fellowship grants for all schemes may be held at approved UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), approved Research Council Institutes (RCIs) and approved Independent Research Organisations (IROs). Full details of [approved RCIs and IROs](#) can be found on the UKRI website.

4.3.1 KE Fellowship Job sharing

To ensure a diverse pool of applicants can apply to the KE Fellowship scheme, joint applications from those wishing to job share are encouraged.

We recommend that you contact the Fellowship team before applying on a job-share basis.

Only one application is required. Applicants must be able to demonstrate why they and the proposed application would not be better served by two separate fellowships.

5. Assessment Process

Proposals will be assessed equally on the potential impact of the proposal and the suitability of the Knowledge Exchange Fellow (see table below). The REF definition of impact is: "an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia".

Criteria (equally weighted)	What the assessment will look for
Suitability of applicant	Relevance of applicant's experience to the proposal and their approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised to be of high standard relative to their career stage • A broad understanding of the research / innovation landscape and the value of knowledge exchange and translation • Clear evidence of knowledge exchange, innovation or engagement leadership • Demonstrate an ability to engage effectively, build partnerships, be a clear communicator and/or disseminator of knowledge and innovation • Demonstrate an ability to develop and mature new relationships and influence across multiple disciplines and sectors
Potential impact	Alignment of proposal to call scope Quality and innovation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovativeness of the programme of work and the scale of the impact User engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of the involvement of users in design and delivery Efficiency and effective management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of work plan exemplifying how the programme will deliver on objectives; • Justification of resources requested; including partner contributions of cash or in kind and leverage. • Evidence of the potential for a lasting legacy and long term sustainability

Applications will go through a two-stage process:

- A sift by a panel
- Interview by the same panel.

The panel will be comprised of members with relevant expertise, ensuring a balance of different perspectives, disciplines, expertise and affiliations, with diversity in mind. These panel members expertise can include:

- Knowledge Exchange Expert
- Environmental science specialism
- Non-academic engagement organisation
- Institutional and cross-disciplinary perspectives
- Public engagement practitioner / expert

Applicants will be given brief feedback from the Panel summarising the reasons why the proposal was successful/unsuccessful in being invited to interview. Further feedback will be provided to all those invited to interview. NERC will use the recommendations of the interview

panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions.

6. Timetable

- Announcement published: September 2020
- Deadline for submission of proposals: 2nd December 2020
- Moderating sift panel meets: January 2021
- Interviews: March 2021
- Latest start date for projects: July 2021

7. Contact and support

For all enquiries, please contact the NERC Fellowships Team (fellowships@nerc.ukri.org) or Hannah King (publicengagement@nerc.ukri.org).

For more information on developing public engagement projects and good partnership working please see suggested guidelines on the [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) and [Connected Communities](#). Many higher education institutes have internal support for engagement, this could be in several different teams, such as engagement including public engagement, communications, impact, widening participation and so on. People working in these teams, and those from across and outside of academia may be able to provide valuable external feedback on your plans.

Annex 1

When is public engagement in and out of scope?

Applicants may focus up to 100% of their application on engaging public end-users.

Applicants which focus on public engagement must be planned such that it has intended outcomes and impacts, and in addition, there must also be demonstrable impact on research(ers) as well, as per [NERC's definition of public engagement](#):

NERC uses the [National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement \(NCCPE\)'s broad definition of public engagement](#) with research (based on consultation across the higher education sector):

"Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."

Purposes of engagement in scope for KE, when these types of activities increase the impact of research:

- Sharing what we do (inspiring, informing)
- Responding (to societal needs, requests)
- Creating knowledge together, or public doing research
- Applying knowledge together (collaborating, innovating)
- Learning from others (consulting)
- Changing attitudes, or behaviour

The groups you might work with in public engagement are broader than 'professional end-users' that are the focus of KE. It is essential to consider specifically who the public end-users (non-professionals) you are hoping to engage with, and it can be useful to [consider the many types of organisations and intermediaries](#) that this includes.