# UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme

## Phase One - call for Host organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Closing date</strong></th>
<th>7 February 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding available</strong></td>
<td>No funds are available through Phase One: Call for host organisations. A further call issued as Phase two: Embedded Researchers will follow in 2020.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funding mode/stream</strong></td>
<td>Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NERC Core or UKRI/Collective Fund budget</strong></td>
<td>UKRI</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project duration</strong></td>
<td>Up to 12 months</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funding partners (if applicable)</strong></td>
<td>UKRI (AHRC, EPSRC, ESRC), Met Office</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Start date requirements (if applicable)</strong></td>
<td>3 August 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Call aims and objectives</strong></td>
<td>Non-academic UK based host organisations are invited to submit research and knowledge brokering ideas for embedded researchers. The opportunity provides up to 12 months support for researchers to work with host organisations to co-develop UK based research in line with the aims of the UK Climate Resilience programme and business, third sector, industry and policy needs and priorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility criteria</strong></td>
<td>This call is open to non-academic host organisations offering research and knowledge brokering ideas to enlist an academic researcher to undertake a placement for a defined research or translational project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:climateresilience@nerc.ukri.org">climateresilience@nerc.ukri.org</a> 01793 411565</td>
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</table>
1. Summary

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) is inviting proposals from non-academic host organisations to partner researchers in the UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme, funded through the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) Wave 1. The programme aims to draw together fragmented climate research and expertise to deliver robust, multi- and inter-disciplinary research into climate risks and adaptation solutions. This will help to ensure that the UK is resilient to climate variability and change, and powerfully positioned to exploit the opportunities of adaptation and green growth.

It is widely expected that society will face serious challenges from projected changes in average climate conditions and climate variability; however, our understanding of potential impacts and necessary approaches to adaptation in the UK requires improvement. This programme has been devised to improve our understanding of how the UK can enhance its resilience to climate change and variability.

The UK Climate Resilience programme is a £18.7 million collaboration between UKRI, led the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Met Office, with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

This initial call from the UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme is for UK based non-academic host organisations to submit research and knowledge brokering ideas. The scheme has been set up to provide up to 12 months support for researchers to work with host organisations to jointly develop UK based research in line with the aims of the UK Climate Resilience programme, business, industry, third sector and policy needs and priorities. Host organisations will gain from having a placement undertake a focused piece of work of direct benefit to their specific organisation.
Researcher placement awards should have a start date no later than 3 August 2020 and have a duration of no more than 12 months. The award will be made across 12 months; however, individual start date, duration and working pattern of the placement should be flexible and negotiated between the researcher and host as appropriate to each opportunity.

No funds are available through this phase one call for host organisations. A further call (Phase two: call for Embedded Researchers) will follow in 2020 for researchers to bid for host organisation opportunities. Up to five placements will be delivered through this first round; we plan to run one more round for up to three placements in 2021/2022.

2. Background

2.1 Strategic Priorities Fund

The Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) has been set up to build upon the vision of a ‘common research fund’ set out in Sir Paul Nurse’s independent review of the Research Councils. The fund will drive an increase in high-quality multi- and interdisciplinary research and innovation, ensure that UKRI’s investment links up effectively with Government departments’ research priorities and opportunities, and ensure that the system is able to respond to strategic priorities and opportunities.

2.2 UK Climate Resilience

This programme aims to draw together fragmented climate research and expertise to deliver robust, multi- and inter-disciplinary climate risk and adaptation solutions research ensuring the UK is resilient to climate variability and change and powerfully positioned to exploit the opportunities of adaptation and green growth.

Climate change and variability affect all aspects of society through impacts on both human and natural systems as well as built and engineered environments. Effective adaptation builds capacity to respond to this variability and change and is one of two broad and increasingly important strategies (along with mitigation) for the management of risk from climate (Moss et al. 2013\(^1\)). Even under the most optimistic mitigation scenarios there is an urgent need to build resilience and accelerate adaptation to climate variability and change (IPCC 2018). Informing the extensive range of actions needed to manage climate risks, reduce damage without exacerbating existing inequalities, and realise emerging opportunities, is a critical scientific, societal and cultural challenge.

It is widely recognised that single disciplinary approaches will not be able to ‘solve’ this complex challenge; what is needed are multi- and inter-disciplinary research efforts, that include the natural, physical, engineering, health, arts and social sciences. Addressing this

\(^1\) Moss et al. 2013 [https://science.sciencemag.org/content/342/6159/696](https://science.sciencemag.org/content/342/6159/696)
challenge also requires the engagement and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, comprising industry, other practitioners and policy-makers.

The UK Climate Resilience Programme provides an opportunity to improve climate risk assessment and enhance UK resilience by encouraging and funding high-quality multi- and interdisciplinary research and innovation using integrative approaches that cross-traditional disciplinary boundaries. It provides space for pioneering research, laying the foundation for future capability and aims to link effectively with Government departments’ research priorities and opportunities.

3. Scope

3.1 UK Climate Resilience programme objectives

The overarching objectives of the UK Climate Resilience programme seek to drive innovative multi- and inter-disciplinary research within the UKRI and Met Office communities to address the knowledge gaps identified above. The central objectives of the programme are:

1. Characterising and quantifying climate-related risks
2. Managing climate-related risks through adaptation
3. Co-producing climate services

Further details about the programme scope are found in the UK Climate Resilience Science Plan. The plan was informed by consultation with UKRI and Met Office communities and climate resilience stakeholders from public, private and third sectors, consideration of past and on-going programme activities, Government departments’ research priorities, the evolving UK climate resilience research landscape and the state-of-the-art in relevant disciplines.

It is strongly recommended that all applicants read the UK Climate Resilience Science Plan in advance of applying.

3.2 UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme

The Embedded Researcher scheme acknowledges the gap that can exist between the production of relevant knowledge and information for building climate resilience and its use in organisations and business strategy, decision-making and making sense of climate risks and opportunities in our daily lives.

Producers of climate information, knowledge and understanding, and the people acting on it, work closely to ensure its relevance, accessibility and usefulness. To work well, such co-production requires understanding of and mutual respect for the knowledge, language and expertise of all parties involved. This challenges the nature of traditional research both for
academic partners who are used to leading the research process and organisations who may be used to commissioning tightly defined ‘consultancy’ projects (Taylor et al. 2017). To make robust, relevant and climate resilient decisions knowledge of different forms and disciplines are needed. The challenge is not one of a simple transfer of knowledge from academic knowledge ‘producers’ to decision making ‘users’, but on building connections between the knowledge, the people (and organisations) who produce and hold this knowledge, and their decision-making processes.

The embedded researcher approach provides an opportunity for co-exploration of climate information needed for decision-making in a particular context. By spending significant time within a host organisation (e.g. national government departments, local government, arms-length, third sector and private organisation) embedded researchers gain a depth and breadth of understanding of the relevant decision-making contexts as well as challenges to the uptake of climate information as it is normally provided.

By having a foot in both an academic and a host organisation, embedded researchers act as a knowledge broker linking the two (or more) sides and understanding the tensions and requirements that each context experiences. This implies playing several potential roles, including identifying shared objectives, addressing research questions of mutual interest, and facilitating connections and cooperation between research, policy and practice. The outputs of these placements are anticipated to be both the findings of the jointly developed research and practice insight into undertaking this research and what is means to act as an intermediary.

3.3 Phase one: Host organisation call

In this, phase one of the UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme, non-academic host organisations are invited to submit research and knowledge brokering ideas for embedded researchers.

Submissions from potential hosts will be assessed for their suitability and fit to the scheme. Successful hosts will be advertised to potential applicants by UKRI in the subsequent UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher call for researchers in March 2020.

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From having dedicated time of a researcher, host organisations gain to undertake a focused piece of co-developed translational or innovative research, flexible within the call aims to ensure it is of direct benefit to their organisation. Hosts are invited to specify areas of research interest and outline what support they can provide (see Section 5: Application Process).

Potential activities for embedded researchers could include, but are not limited to:

- **Co-exploring and signposting** existing knowledge to support specific decision making contexts
- **Co-producing new knowledge** on processes of adaptation and building climate resilience
- **Integrating** relevant climate information into organisational decision making
- **Strengthening networks** across the public, private and civil society sectors and building a culture of learning within these networks
- **Sharing lessons about the practice of adapting** to a changing climate

3.4 Phase two: call for Embedded Researchers

Following the assessment of host organisation bids, successful host organisation opportunities will be advertised in March 2020 for researchers to apply to. UKRI will provide with up to 12 months support to work with host organisations to co-produce UK based research in line with the aims of the UK Climate Resilience Programme as well as business, industry, third sector and policy needs and priorities.

Each embedded researcher will be employed by an academic institution but are expected to be based within their host organisation while undertaking the research that fulfils the remits of both host and academic employer organisations. Researchers may be required to play other knowledge brokering and network-building functions to build awareness of and support the application of existing academic or practice based knowledge. In doing so, supporting decision making in both the academic and the host organisation that builds climate resilience for public good.
4 Programme requirements

4.1 Programme funding

Up to five embedded researcher placements will be funded through the Embedded Researcher scheme. No funds are available for host organisations through this opportunity. Each researcher (detailed in the later phase two Embedded Researcher call) can apply for up to £70K (at 80% FEC). An additional round for up to three further embedded researchers will be released in summer 2020. The remit of which will be developed following the funding of initial placements.

The expected start date for embedded researcher awarded by UKRI under this round is 3 August 2020. It is recognised that the start date, duration and working pattern of the placement should be flexible and negotiated between the researcher and host as appropriate to each opportunity. The award will be funded across 12 months.

4.2 Proposal requirements

Non-academic host organisations are invited to submit research and knowledge brokering ideas for the UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme.

The exact length of deployment within the host organisation can be negotiated between the applicant and host within the budget allocated for each project, but must be no more than 12 months. Researchers must be supported in their work by a key contact within the host organisation.

Each project will involve a non-academic partner in the capacity of the host organisation, an academic researcher who will undertake the placement and a research institution. The embedded researcher will be formally employed by a research institution but spend a significant period of time embedded in the host organisation to conduct the research. Embedded researchers will play a key role in bridging between academics, decision-makers and practitioners. The role is likely to focus on independent research and may also entail signposting to relevant information, collaboration with other embedded researchers and development of additional knowledge brokering mechanisms e.g. learning labs.

The research question and the precise role of the embedded researcher will be agreed between the host organisation and the embedded researcher in response to research questions outlined in advance by the host organisation.

The successful researchers will be based in their host organisation while undertaking their project to establish a good understanding of day-to-day working, drivers, decision-making contexts and knowledge needs of both sides as well as barriers to action. By working with both host organisation colleagues and academics, the embedded researchers will have the opportunity to gather relevant data and information, working collaboratively to generate new
knowledge, synthesise and communicate findings to promote learning across the relevant science, business, and policy domain.

Host organisations must submit a completed Host Specification Form detailing their UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme opportunity for research or translational activity.

Host organisations may submit a **maximum of two separate** Embedded Researcher opportunities. These must be submitted on separate forms. (See Application Process for further details).

### 4.3 Embedded Researcher coordination and guidance

Each embedded researcher will have a lead contact person within their host organisation with whom they will collaborate to guide the development of a work plan with flexibility to allow researcher to follow emergent opportunities for the host as well as their academic ambitions (e.g. presentations at conferences, writing papers). Coordination, guidance and support will be provided through regular meetings (virtual and face-to-face) to develop agreed activities, outputs and reports. Support will also be provided by the UK Climate Resilience Champions.

### 4.4 Programme management

UKRI and the Met Office jointly deliver the UK Climate Resilience programme. The Programme is managed and overseen by a UKRI/Met Office Programme Board, which is advised by a Steering Committee. Funded researchers will be required to work with the UK Climate Resilience Champions and engage with cross-programme activities.
Figure 2. UK Climate Resilience governance.

Further details of the governance structure as well as Steering Committee membership can be found on the [programme website](#).

4.5 Reporting requirements

Funding will be awarded as a research grant to each embedded researcher via their academic organisation. As with all UKRI grant holders, there will be a requirement to report through the UKRI reporting system ResearchFish; this is required annually and continues for up to five years post grant end.

UKRI and the Champions may also require researchers and host organisations to respond to queries for information as required.

4.6 Linking to further UK Climate Resilience activities

It is envisioned that there will be the opportunity to enable sharing of practice across the cohort of embedded researchers funded through this call e.g. through meetings and a final workshop to synthesise emerging experience and insight on the knowledge intermediary role for climate resilience across the different embedded researcher contexts.

During their placement, successful embedded researchers may also be expected to collaborate with the Met Office and other activities funded through the UK Climate Resilience programme where appropriate.
5 Application process

5.1 How to apply

Closing Date: 4pm on 7 February 2020

A copy of the host organisation specification form should be submitted to climateresilience@nerc.ukri.org (as a Word document) by no later than 4pm on 7 February 2020. Host organisations may submit a maximum of two separate opportunities. Each opportunity must be submitted as a separate form.

Applicants must ensure they fill in all sections of the form, which requires the following details:

- Host organisation (including location if applicable)
- Host organisation contact details
- Host organisation support
- Project title (if applicable)
- Host organisation summary (including relevance to UK Climate Resilience programme)
- How can the host organisation offer flexibility to allow the work can be conducted
- Project Partners (if relevant to the delivery of the placement)
- Expected outputs and benefits for host organisation
- Project and activities to be undertaken by applicant
- Expected benefits and outcomes for successful applicant

Applicants should ensure that their proposal conforms to all eligibility and submission rules, detailed in this document, otherwise their proposal may be rejected.

The expected start date for embedded researcher awarded by UKRI under this scheme is 3 August 2020. It is recognised that the duration and working pattern of the placement should be flexible and negotiated between the researcher and host as appropriate to each opportunity. The award will be funded across 12 months

5.2 Eligibility

This call is open to UK based non-academic host organisations (e.g. national government departments, local government, business, industry, third sector) offering research and knowledge brokering ideas to enlist an academic researcher to undertake a placement for a defined research or translational project.

Examples of potential host activities are listed in section 3.3 of this document (Host organisation call scope). Potential applicants may also contact UKRI to discuss opportunities.
Host organisations may be involved in **no more than two** separate opportunities submitted to this call.

It is envisaged that the majority of placements will involve one academic researcher undertaking a placement at one host organisation. However, proposals may include opportunities for up to two academic researchers. These may be from the same or multiple academic organisations.

### 6 Assessment process

All host organisation opportunities received which meet eligibility criteria will be assessed by an independent panel of experts.

Proposals will be directly scored against the degree to which they address the objectives and scope of the UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher scheme. (Details of these are in section 3 ‘Scope’). Proposals that do not strongly meet the criteria of the call will not be selected for the next phase where researchers can apply for opportunities.

Feedback will be provided to both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

### 7 Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase one: Host organisation call issued</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host organisation call deadline</td>
<td>7 February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host organisation bids assessed</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase two: Embedded Researcher call issued</td>
<td>Early-March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embedded Researcher call deadline</td>
<td>30 April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment panel</td>
<td>Late-May / June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes announced</td>
<td>Late June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Placements start</td>
<td>3 August 2020</td>
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### 8 Contact

For all enquiries, please contact the UK Climate Resilience secretariat:

Email: climateresilience@nerc.ukri.org

Phone: 01793 411565