

Transforming Construction Network Plus – FAQ Small Research Project

1. Making contact

- **Where can I find information about this project?**

You can find information on our website:

<http://bit.ly/fundingcalls-transformingconstructionnetworkplus>

Join our mailing list to hear about the latest news, upcoming events, and funding opportunities from the project: www.bit.ly/transforming-construction-network-plus

- **Who should I contact if I have any questions about the project?**

Please email us at enquiries.tcnetworkplus@ucl.ac.uk

- **Is it possible to meet the N + Team to talk about a potential project?**

If you would like to request a face-to-face or Skype meeting, please email us on enquiries.tcnetworkplus@ucl.ac.uk. We will do our best to support you.

2. Lead University and Project Partners

- **Why are universities asked to be lead partners on small projects?**

Having universities as lead partners is a requirement of our funding. It is also a way for us to simplify the award process, should you be successful. Organisations that are eligible to receive UKRI funding can act as the lead on a proposal. You may wish to include collaborators from industry, government or other sectors as partners if this is appropriate, but a university must take the lead role.

- **Can Co-investigators be named individuals from other UK-based universities?**

Yes, members of staff, including those from your own or other universities, can be included as co-investigators in your proposal. However, the project team should not exceed more than **three Co-Investigators**. The inclusion of Co-Investigators should be clearly justified in respect of their added value (e.g. bringing expertise from a different discipline, or a different methodology), and also the duties/responsibilities that they will commit to undertake as part of the project.

- **How much time does a Principal Investigator (PI) have to spend on the project?**

A PI can request a minimum of 2% of the grant if they act as a mentor for early career researchers. Otherwise, a PI is expected to be allocated at around 20%. Larger requests would require a more detailed justification in the application form.

- **Can industrial partners receive funding for small projects (provided a university is the lead partner)?**

Yes, industrial partners or consultants can receive funding. However, this should not exceed 10% of the value of the total amount requested. The industry partner/s would receive payment through the lead university. It will be the responsibility of the lead university to arrange any such contract/sub-contract with the industry partner/s.

- **Do you have any mechanisms for finding partners, academics or business?**

We do not have the resources to operate an official 'brokering' service. However, we will be glad to provide informal advice. Please feel free to contact us directly by email at enquiries.tcnetworkplus@ucl.ac.uk.

- **Can early career researchers (ECR) apply for small project funding?**

Yes, ECRs can apply for small project funding, however they cannot act as the Principal Investigator. If you are unsure of whether someone's employment status would be eligible under this call, please contact us – we may also seek advice from UKRI on this matter.

In addition to this, the N+ is proposing a discipline-hopping scheme exclusively for the ECR community. Further information on this mechanism can be found [here](#).

- **What is the definition of 'early career researcher'?**

Early Career Researchers shall typically be no more than four years post award of PhD/EngD. They may be within a researcher role or an academic role at the point of application. It includes post doctorate researchers (such as research assistants and research fellows), but may also include probationary lecturers.

- **Can post-doctoral researchers be recruited to participate in a project**

Post-doctoral researchers may participate in the project, however they should be named on the proposal and ready to work if the project is successful. The project duration does not allow sufficient time for the recruitment of new staff to new post.

- **Are international partner(s) eligible to receive funding?**

International partners are not eligible for funding under this particular call. However, applicants are allowed to use technologies developed in other countries and demonstrate a possible application/implementation in the UK. You may also request funds for travel and subsistence, or webinar fees, to enable you to bring in international academic experts to input to your small project's activities, if you feel this would be appropriate.

3. Funding available, eligible and ineligible costs

- **How much funding will be allocated in this round?**

The Transforming Construction Network Plus will allocate up to £600,000.

- **How many projects will be funded?**

This will depend on the budget amount requested by the proposals that are the highest ranked after peer review.

- **Does the 80% FEC costing include Estates, Infrastructure and Indirect costs?**

Yes. However, please note that some costs are ineligible. Please refer to the call outline (p.7-8). For any other questions related to the funding, please refer to the ESRC funding rules and practices at [this link](#). If in doubt, please email us.

- **The maximum award for a single project is £75,000 (at 80% FEC), does it mean the applicants can receive up to £75,000 from the funder?**

Applicants can receive up to £75,000 from the funder and therefore can request up to £93,750 (100% FEC). Please liaise with staff in your own university who are experienced in preparing research costings for UKRI grant applications, as your application costings will need to align with UKRI expectations. Any applications which exceed this cap run the risk of being rejected immediately, prior to any peer review taking place, so please take time to check your costings carefully before you make a submission.

- **Can industrial partners contribute additional funding to a project?**

Yes. Industry or other non-academic partners are warmly encouraged to contribute additional funding to proposals, if the partnership is relevant and if it demonstrates additionality, e.g. greater impact. Such contributions could be cash and/or in-kind. Any industry contributions will not affect the total amount that can be requested. The maximum will remain of £75,000 (at 80% FEC) for any single project. It is not mandatory to seek such support however.

- **Can we request money to attend conference and industry events in the UK?**

Applicants may request money for events, but only if they take place within the duration of the project. Applicants should also clearly justify the need for this request.

- **Can we request money for open access publishing?**

Applicants may request money for open access publishing, but any expenditure must be within the project's duration.

- **Is the £10,000 limit for equipment cumulative or per item?**

Applicants may request up to £10,000 in total for equipment, regardless of the number of items or when they are needed on the project.

- **Are consultancy fees eligible?**

Applicants may request up to 10% of the project value for consultancy, regardless of the nature of the consultancy that is required.

- **If I am successful, how will the N+ support project delivery?**

The N+ team will liaise with successful project teams, to help them prepare for engagement and impact. We will provide mentoring support, and advise on reporting requirements. If you have any concerns about reporting and how it will work please contact us.

- **If I am successful, will you provide support to access follow-on funding?**

The N+ team will be able to provide some limited advice to successful projects, in respect of seeking and accessing follow-on funding to take their activities forward. Successful applicants would be advised of this in due course.

4. Type of projects

- **Can projects look at retrofit, renovation or remodelling of buildings?**

This is out of scope for this call. The Transforming Construction Challenge programme is focussed on new building construction. That said, we expect some proposals to tackle industry problems that, if solved for new building construction, may also indirectly benefit retrofit situations.

- **Would legal, structural, institutional or systemic issues be in scope?**

If the project has a clear research problem or question, and addresses the issue within the time and resource available, then it may well be within scope. Procurement is in scope, for example. If you are unsure whether your idea is in scope, then please contact the N+ team.

- **Which TRL level are you expecting the projects to address?**

Projects are expected to reach Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) between 3 (Analytical and experimental critical function and/or characteristic proof of concept) and 8 (Actual system completed and qualified through test and demonstration).

5. Review process

- **Who will review the project proposals?**

The proposals will be reviewed by peer reviewers. They will be appointed and selected by the N+ team and its Strategy Board, which includes representatives of ESRC and UKRI. A minimum of two reviewers shall be sought for each proposal, none of which will be from any of the organisations named on a given proposal. The pool will include a mix of academic and industry and UKRI reviewers, covering the breadth of the subject areas covered by the Transforming Construction Challenge.

- **Will feedback be provided?**

Feedback will be provided to all applicants (successful and unsuccessful) at the beginning of January 2020, via an email to the Lead Applicant. We would expect the Lead Applicant to convey this to any Co-Investigators and Project Partners.