

## **Call for Research Proposals: Guidance for Applicants**

**Issued: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Expressions of Interest (Stage 1), Deadline: Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

**Full proposals (Stage 2), Deadline: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021**

This document is intended to provide guidance to those interested in applying for funded research proposals to be commissioned by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) in Summer 2021.

Applicants should read the full Terms and Conditions before submitting their proposal.

### **Am I eligible to apply?**

To be eligible to apply, project leads must be:

- Based in the UK.
- Based at a recognised UK research organisation or based in another public, private or third sector organisation whose primary business is research. This includes Higher Education Institutions, recognised UKRI Independent Research Organisations, commercial research consultancy companies or third sector organisations
- Postgraduate students are not eligible to apply as a project lead
- Individuals currently named as investigators/researchers as part of the PEC consortium are not eligible to apply
- International partners are not eligible to apply as a project lead but may be included in proposals, providing the applicant is UK-based. Please note that this call is not intended to support overseas travel, nor attendance at conferences organised by a third party

### **Does my project have to address one of the three sub-themes that you have identified?**

The suggested sub-themes have been identified by the PEC's Management Board as areas where there is a need for research. 'Research' need not involve the gathering and analysis of new data. It can also involve the translation of existing research into evidence and/or insights for practitioners and/or policymakers.

Applications for projects outside of these areas will need to convince the panel that they have identified an area which is in strong need of research and not already

addressed by existing or ongoing studies either within [the PEC's portfolio](#) or being undertaken elsewhere.

### **What are the expected outputs?**

All funded projects will be expected to generate one or more documented deliverables, such as a [PEC Discussion Paper](#), which will be shared on the PEC's website. Other outputs/deliverables that are encouraged include policy workshops and/or events. Projects are also encouraged to produce articles for publication in academic journals, but these will not be regarded as primary outputs for the purpose of the Call.

The final outputs/deliverables will be agreed at the time of contracting the project, as will the timescales for delivery. All proposals should demonstrate a commitment to generating insights that further at least one of policy, evidence, and industry practice. All outputs will be expected to acknowledge the support of PEC funding and adhere, where required, to its brand guidelines.

### **Is there an upper and lower limit to the amount of funding I can request?**

The PEC's Management Board has not determined a set number of studies it intends to commission. As such, both larger and smaller proposals will be given full consideration. At the upper end, proposals costing over £50,000 are very unlikely to be supported. At the lower end, we set no minimum. However, applicants should be aware that the PEC has limited capacity to manage externally commissioned research, and we will therefore not be aiming to fund a large number of smaller proposals. In all cases, quality of research, resulting deliverables, and value for money, will be the primary considerations.

### **What costs are eligible?**

PEC funding is intended to cover the direct project costs of a proposal. These costs should be clearly attributable to the project activities involved in planning, developing, and conducting the research.

Detailed and highly accurate costings are not required at the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage. However, the costings provided in the EOI should be sufficiently accurate that there is not a large discrepancy between the indicative costs and those included in a full proposal, if invited to submit to the second stage. At EOI stage, costs should be included in the 'Indicative Costs' section of the application form.

Eligible costs may include:

- Staff Costs (Please see notes below)
- Research Assistance
- Project planning and development costs (cost of travel for discussion in the UK; initial workshops with potential partners)

- Travel and subsistence for UK scholars; including travel to disseminate the results of the research through engagement and impact events
- Workshops or events to advance the programme of research or engagement and impact associated with the project (i.e. the costs of travel and subsistence key participants)

The following items **are not** currently eligible for funding:

- Institutional overheads and indirect costs, or any element that should properly be ascribed to institutional overheads
- VAT (which is not payable on grants)
- Equipment costs including computer hardware including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras, etc
- Books and other permanent resources
- The preparation of camera-ready copy, copy-editing, proof-reading, indexing, nor any other editorial task

#### **Staff costs for applicants based at Higher Education Institutions or Independent Research Organisations:**

Where appropriate to the project, directly allocated staff costs may be included. In these cases, PEC funding will support 80% of the full economic cost (FEC) of this requested resource. These costs should be based on estimated staff salaries and the number of hours attributed to the project.

Applicants may also choose to include directly incurred staff costs as applicable. These costs must be calculated on actual salary costs directly attributable to the project. In such cases PEC funding will support 100% of this resource.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Staff costs for applicants based in commercial research consultancy companies or third sector organisations:**

All requested staff costs should be entered under the Directly Incurred budget heading in the application form. These costs must be calculated on actual salary costs directly attributable to the project. In these cases, PEC funding will support 100% of this resource.

#### **Are you expecting in-kind contributions or matched funding to support the project?**

Whilst in-kind or cash contributions are not mandatory, value for money is a key consideration in the evaluation of proposals. Where support from the host organisation is committed, this should be included in the justification of resources.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Directly allocated** costs are a share of the costs of a resource used by a project, where the same resource is also used by other activities. The key difference between **directly incurred** costs and **directly allocated** costs is that the latter will be charged based upon an estimate, rather than actual cash values.

## How will my project be evaluated?

This Call comprises two stages. The first stage, which lasts for four weeks from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May, invites expressions of interest. The second stage, which lasts for four weeks from Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June, invites selected EOIs to be taken through to full proposal status.

We anticipate this Call will be oversubscribed, meaning that we will receive more proposals than we can fund, and probably more proposals that, in principle, we would fund, were our funds unlimited. To provide an indication, in response to our first Call, we received 43 proposals, and were able to fund six. We will not be able to give feedback on why any specific EOI and/or full proposal was unsuccessful.

We cannot guarantee that all Expressions of Interest will be asked to develop full proposals. Indeed, a motivation in inviting EOIs first is to reduce the burden on bidders who are unlikely to succeed. Equally, there is no guarantee that any applicant who is invited to develop their EOI into a full proposal will receive funding.

All eligible EOIs will be reviewed by our selection panel of senior PEC researchers, in the week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> June. The following criteria will be used:

### Criteria description

**C1** Fit with the stated theme and sub-themes

**C2** Degree to which the proposal responds to the needs of the creative industries

**C3** Potential impact of the research across policy, evidence, and industry practice

### Criteria Scale

Poor	1
Fair/some weaknesses	2
Good	3
Excellent	4
Outstanding	5

Whilst bearing in mind our desire to fund projects that address different issues, the highest graded proposals will be invited to take part in the second stage, for which full proposals will be required. Expressions of Interest with low gradings will be declined.

The proposals received in the second stage will also be scored by a panel of senior PEC researchers, in the week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> July. The following criteria will be used:

### Criteria description

**C4** The overall quality of the research, including design and methods, dissemination, and the specific intended policy impact of the proposed deliverables. This will also include consideration of the strength and competences to deliver of the proposed team and any partners

**C5** The contribution to evidence-based knowledge, particularly in consideration of the PEC's existing portfolio of research

**C6** Value for money

### Criteria Scale

Poor	1
Fair/some weaknesses	2
Good	3
Excellent	4
Outstanding	5

Consideration will also be given to the effectiveness with which any guidance from the review panel following stage 1 has been taken into account. Dealing with those comments does not guarantee success, however.

The panel will select and recommend to the PEC Management Board that it funds the best portfolio of projects that are complementary to our existing research and other activities, span the full range of the needs of the Creative Industries and make best use of the total available budget. This means that individual proposals that are very highly graded may not be funded, as there may be one or more preferred submissions addressing the same or similar issues. Proposals with low gradings will not be taken forward.

The panel may seek references from applicants. The PEC intends to issue award letters by early September 2021.

### **When should I expect to start my project, and over what duration can the research be undertaken?**

You should plan to start your project from early September 2021 and complete it within a maximum of nine months (May 2022). While precise timings will be subject to agreements, the research is expected to address a pressing need for insights across policy, evidence, and industry practice, and therefore to be undertaken promptly.