# **Research England Development (RED) Fund Application – Internal Guidance**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to provide prospective RED Fund applicants and their College DoRs with guidance on the University’s internal selection process for the RED Fund. The RED Fund is highly competitive and Research England’s guidance expects universities to undertake a rigorous internal evaluation process to ensure strategic fit with both RE’s and the University’s strategic priorities. Research England is unlikely to fund more than one substantial project per lead institution per year. Applications must be made through your College Director of Research (DoR) who, following consultation with the Head of College (HoC), will submit your application for consideration by the Strategic Themes and Partnership Group (STPG) to determine which application goes forward to the RED fund programme. **You should not start informal discussions with Research England about your proposal until the College and University have had the opportunity to review your proposed project and sanction such discussions.**

***Note:*** *if you are invited to participate in a RED Fund proposal led by another institution you should also advise your College DoR and continue to follow the guidance provided here.*

The STPG is chaired by the Provost and members include the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer (PVC for R&KT), DPVC for Strategic Partnerships, DPVC for Industrial Partners, DPVC for Regional Economic Engagement, Head of Strategic Research Development, and the Director of Business Engagement.

DoRs should submit no more than **two proposals** per year per College to the STPG. Applicants should align their proposals to the strategic aims of the College/University/Strategic Themes for Major Funding which are linked to Government and UKRI policy priorities, with a particular emphasis on delivering innovative and novel approaches. Multi-disciplinary and cross-college bids are encouraged.

**2. Overview of the RED Fund**

The RED Fund commits up to £27 million in annual funding and aims to drive innovation in research and Knowledge Exchange (KE) in higher education in line with the developing priorities of Government and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The Fund does this by supporting developmental projects for **significant public benefit,** and typically projects with potential national benefits that, once piloted, could be extended to enable the broader HE Sector to realise such benefits. Projects will most likely be **collaborative** with external stakeholders including industry, policymakers and other universities, in order to secure benefits beyond the lead provider. Examples of partnerships can be found under heading 4: ‘Successful RED Applicants’.

The fund supports the following activities:

* Activities that contribute to Government and UKRI policy priorities, with a particular emphasis on delivering innovative and novel approaches.
* Collaborations between higher education providers, industry and/or business partners.
* A risk sharing approach. Due to the innovative nature of projects that the RED fund seeks to support, Research England expect financial contributions, investments and/or leverage from appropriate partners and beneficiaries to support higher risk activities.
* Projects that increase the effectiveness or efficiency of research or KE for wider societal and economic benefits.
* Projects that clearly seek to disseminate key learning points to the sector to enhance positive practice for 'what works' and 'what doesn't work.'
* Activities that are unable to be supported through any other means.
* Innovations with a clear plan for sustainability.

**The RED Fund is not suitable for standard research projects that might otherwise be funded by a Research Council, even where these have collaborative partners.**

There is no formal minimum or maximum amount that institutions can bid for, however the upper limit will be determined by the nature of the project and its potential value. Research England does not envisage supporting bids that are less than £100,000 or above £5 million. At the high end of the scale, projects would need to represent exceptional quality and value towards delivery of RED policy priorities and have national benefit.

Please note that **successful proposals generally emerge after extensive discussions with Research England**, and their templates must be used for all formal submissions. Links to full guidance, assessment criteria, templates and current priorities can be found [here.](https://re.ukri.org/funding/our-funds-overview/research-england-development-red-fund/)

**3. University of Birmingham Internal Assessment Process**

The RED Fund considers proposals at any time and there is an ongoing application and approval process.

Those interested in applying should comply with the following steps of the University’s internal assessment process:

1. Interested applicants should have an early conversation with their College DoR before completing the University’s Expression of Interest form. Projects in the nascent stage of maturity are encouraged. Colleagues from Research Support Services (RSS) will be available to support and advise with regard to applications.
2. The University’s Expression of Interest Form **(Appendix 1)** should be completed by interested academics and returned to College DoRs.
3. DoRs will put forward no more than two applications per year per College to the STPG via the PVC for R&KT, who will provide feedback to applicants accordingly.
4. The STPG will review applications according to the criteria set out in **Appendix 2** and decide which proposal will progress to the RED Fund application stage. College DoRs will be notified accordingly.
5. The PVC for R&KT\* will then test the proposal with a representative of Research England who can advise on general fit with the fund policies and priorities, and the likely chances of success. If the project idea is at an early stage of thinking, an initial discussion may be more suitable. With support from the PVC for R&KT and relevant College DoRs, the Academic Lead(s) will be requested by Research England to complete a short summary of their proposed project idea, on one or two sides of A4. The summary is likely to be based on the EOI form completed under Step 1 **(Appendix 1).** Research England will look to provide a response within two weeks on the next steps.

\**Please note Research England does not wish to deal with multiple approaches simultaneously; it expects senior level buy in, that bids will have an executive level sponsor, and that universities will have undertaken some form of selection/prioritisation process.*

**4. Successful RED Applicants**

The table below is a sample list of recent successful RED proposals:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lead Provider** | **Partners** | **Project Title** | **Funding** |
| University of Birmingham | Includes WMCA, GBS LEP and WMGC. Full list [here.](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/city-redi/wm-redi/partners.aspx) | [The West-Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute (WM-REDI) @ The Exchange](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/city-redi/wm-redi/index.aspx) | £4,913,977 |
| University of Liverpool | [N8 Research Partnership](https://www.n8research.org.uk/) – Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York | [Enhancing first-time postdoctoral career development](https://news.liverpool.ac.uk/2019/04/10/4-4-million-boost-for-postdoctoral-career-development/) | £3,630,250 |
| University of Nottingham | Includes the Science Council, Technician Commitment, Wellcome Trust, British Geological Survey, Rolls Royce plc, Unilever, Midlands Engine and the 8 [Midlands Innovation Universities including Birmingham.](https://midlandsinnovation.org.uk/About) | [TALENT: Advancing status and opportunity for the technical community in UK higher education](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/universities-lead-project-to-deliver-largest-ever-investment-into-he-technicians) | £3,048,451 |
| University of Oxford | Includes University of Toronto, HEC Montreal, HEC Paris. Full list [here.](https://www.creativedestructionlab.com/locations/oxford/partners/) | [Creative Destruction Lab](https://re.ukri.org/news-opinions-events/news/oxford-launches-north-american-start-up-scheme-that-will-create-4-000-uk-jobs/) | £2,647,400 |

The complete list of successful RED Funded projects can be found [here.](http://re.ukri.org/index.cfm?LinkServID=48AC2816-5F46-478C-8FAE7510D67BB13F)  As evidenced in the above table, successful applications are those which are multi-partner in nature that build upon policies, priorities or funding of the other eight UKRI Councils and/or wider Industrial Strategy developments. Research England funds projects where the project idea is a genuine priority for the University and one that aligns with priorities for the fund.

A summary of the University of Birmingham’s successful application is detailed in **Appendix 3**.

This guidance has been produced by the Strategic Research Development Team in RSS. For further information or support in developing your ideas please contact the Strategic Projects Development Officer.

# **Appendix 1: RED Fund Expression of Interest Form**

**Research England Development Fund**

**University of Birmingham Expression of Interest Form**

The purpose of this form is to demonstrate alignment of this proposal to the objectives and priorities of the RED fund. This is turn will allow the University to prioritise proposals across the institution and submit the most compelling and strategically aligned projects.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lead Applicant Details** | |
| Name: |  |
| School: |  |
| Telephone: |  |
| Date of Application: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title of Proposal:** |  |
| **1. Overview of Proposal**  Please give a brief overview of the project and the innovative nature of the project. What challenge is being addressed and why is this significant? [Suggested 500 words] | |
|  | |
| **2. Objectives and Alignment**  What are the aims of the project and how do these align with a) Government and UKRI policy priorities; b) Research England’s investment priorities (<https://re.ukri.org/funding/our-funds-overview/research-england-development-red-fund/>) [Suggested 500 words] | |
|  | |
| **3. How does the proposal align with the priorities of your College and the University’s strategic vision for example** [**Birmingham 2026**](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/strategic-framework/birmingham-2026-brochure.pdf)**? Comments from the College DoR and HoC should be included in this section.** [Suggested 500 words] | |
|  | |
| **4. Please provide an overview of the project team including internal and external collaborators**  What partner organisations do you envisage being involved?  How will the project team be structured? What is your plan for gaining commitment from your proposed partners? [Suggested 300 words] | |
|  | |
| **5. What benefits will be generated and who will be the beneficiaries?**  What additionality will be delivered by the project which will not otherwise be realised? What potential is there for national and public benefit? [Suggested 500 words] | |
|  | |
| **6.Why is this funding route suitable to the project?** Why are alternative funding mechanisms not appropriate? What level of potential match funding and other contributions will be sought from partners and beneficiaries? [Suggested 500 words] | |
|  | |
| **7. Budget Overview** | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Category | Cost | Justification | | Capital | £ |  | | Staff | £ |  | | Consumables | £ |  | | IT | £ |  | | Travel and Subsistence | £ |  | | Other (please state) |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | | **Total** | **£** |  | | |
| **8.Project Plan**  Please provide a list of key activities (with potential start and end dates if known). | |
|  | |
| **9.Sustainability Plan**  How do you envisage this activity being sustained beyond the duration of the grant? [Suggested 500 words] | |
|  | |

# **Appendix 2: RED Fund STPG Assessment Guide**

**Research England Development Fund**

**University of Birmingham Assessment Criteria**

The purpose of this form is to facilitate the STPG assessment of EoI Proposals to the RED Fund by applying consistent criteria across the Colleges. Completion of the form will also provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Details** | | |
| Lead Applicant: |  | |
| Project: |  | |
| College: |  | |
| Recommended for Submission to Research England? (Y/N) | |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **1.Alignment to University/College Strategy**  How well is this proposal aligned to the University/College on-going strategy, development, and operations?  Will the University/College support the applicant in developing this proposal?  Is the University/College able to provide the physical infrastructure necessary to support the project? |
|  |
| **2.Partnerships**  Are there clear existing partnerships with external HEI’s or Industry collaborators that can be built on? Is there a clear plan for developing them? |
|  |
| **3.Benefits and Beneficiaries**  Are the benefits and beneficiaries beyond the University clear? Is there potential in the longer term to extend these benefits across England via a broad range of Universities?  Is the knowledge transfer activity obvious? |
|  |
| **4.Funding**  Is the scale of the project appropriate to the RED fund?  Are the activities suggested within the remit of the RED Fund? |
|  |
| **5.Sustainability**  Does the proposal have a plan for sustaining the activity beyond the funding duration?  What support will the University/College be able to provide to the project and beyond? |
| **Sustainability Plan**  **How do you envisage this act being duration of the grant?** |

# **Appendix 3: Summary of WM-REDI Proposal**

The West-Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute (WM-REDI)@ The Exchange: The project will establish the new institute to provide evidence to strengthen the development and delivery of local industrial strategies. The institute will engage with a broad range of stakeholders to support regional decision-making on the optimum mix of investments for inclusive economic growth amongst a wide range of projects. To achieve this the institute will:

1. Develop tools for analysis, evaluation and monitoring, to improve how to select, shape and promote particular innovations, informed by evaluations of the likelihood, timescale and scope of their eventual commercial or social impact, and the likely beneficiaries.

2. Conduct comparative benchmarking to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of UK regions, focusing explicitly on regional systems of innovation and the relative alignment of university R&D with user-needs at the local and national levels.

3. Provide policy support to help shape and implement Local Industrial Strategies (LIS); deliver workshops and training programmes to accelerate three types of economic and social impact: technology commercialisation, innovation in services firms and non-commercial innovation to support improvements in local public services, health and welfare.