

FLF Development Network – Guidance for Applicants

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Part 1: Summary

The FLF Development Network Plus Fund is pot of flexible funding available to researchers associated with the FLF Development Network. The funds (minimum £300K over three years) are designed to support the delivery of novel training and networking opportunities in response to other elements of the programme. Funding will be awarded via a rolling open call, supporting well-defined initiatives that develop and deliver transferable skills, training experiences, or resources – whether short-term or recurrent.

It is anticipated the Plus Funds will provide funding that enables the following, providing the project ideas are aligned with the aims and themes of the network (see Section 3: Scope for more detail):

- the building of proof-of-concept for new ideas
- the running of events which promote the values, cultures and behaviours supported by of UKRI (such as EDI and positive research cultures)
- commercialisation of research
- collaborations with industry-based FLFs
- engagement with new partners
- public engagement

Collaborative applications will be encouraged to further networking, interdisciplinary working relationships and EDI.

Part 2: Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply?

The Plus Funds are open to all researchers registered with the UKRI FLF Development Network.

The Plus Funds are open to all researchers registered with the UKRI FLF Development Network, specifically FLFs from Cohorts 1, 2 and 3, and 40 named early career colleagues nominated by UKRI (hereafter referred to as FLF+s for brevity).

Project teams can involve others outside the FLF Development Network but their membership will need to be justified in the application.

The Lead Applicant (Principle Investigator) will be the main point of contact with the Plus Funds Team and will be responsible for collecting information for the application and submitting the Final Review at the end of the project.

2.2 Eligible applications

More than one application to the Plus Funds by an FLF+ may be possible – the award of funds for multiple projects/activities will be at the discretion of the Plus Funds Review Group, on a case-by-case basis.

Resubmission of applications may be possible if feedback on the original unsuccessful application has been addressed. Any resubmission should indicate in a brief cover letter the changes made to the original application.

Top-ups of funding for existing Plus Funds projects may be possible at the discretion of the Review Group if the applicant can demonstrate a justifiable need and clear benefits.

Applications for follow-on funding for projects may be possible if it can be shown the initial project achieved impact and a strong case is made for the delivery of further benefits.

2.3 Eligible project duration

Projects may start at any time, and must be scheduled to finish prior to the close of the Network in November 2023.

2.4 Eligible funding requests

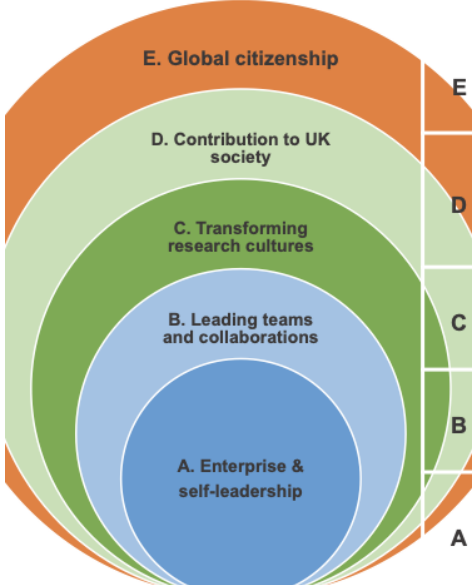
Plus Funds may be requested up to a maximum of £25,000 per application. Proposed activities will be assessed for evidence of sensible and justifiable use of funds.

Part 3: Scope

3.1 Activities in scope

The Plus Funds are broad in scope so that FLF+s may be creative and proactive in their design and delivery of opportunities to support their peers and communities. Successful applications will:

- Reflect the FLF Development Network's signature themes and spheres of influence (below)
- Enhance/build upon existing resources within the FLF Development Network
- Promote networking, interdisciplinary working relationships and/or EDI (applications will normally involve at least two FLF+s in the project or have a strong focus on enabling future collaborations across the network)

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE		SIGNATURE THEMES		
		Navigating uncertainty	Collaborating inclusively	Transforming thinking
	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously reviewing and updating worldview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutually beneficial, equal global partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative contributions to global or grand challenges
	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with policymakers Participation in public debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering with the public and marginalised communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange Commercialising research
	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking outside the box Openness to radical solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building coalitions to tackle systemic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging opportunities Identifying intervention points
	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse networks and mentors Willingness to 'unlearn' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading others positively Intercultural awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing others' capacity to lead and innovate
	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative problem-solving Reflective and adaptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling unconscious bias and inclusion Knowledge exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of purpose Courage and resilience

3.2 Costs in scope

The majority of funding requested should usually be for use against consumable and equipment costs (unless other costs are justified by the application) or for buying out support roles (where appropriate).

3.2.1 Costs usually within Plus Funds scope:

- Accommodation
- Equipment
- Venue hire
- Directly incurred staff costs - including PhD students, post-doctoral research assistants or administrators (for work they would not be expected to undertake through their institutions under their current contract, and where the costs are justified by the extent of the project)
- Event catering
- External facilitator or fees
- Speaker travel expenses – where justified
- Workshop materials
- Relevant software or hardware - e.g. online surveys
- Development costs for websites or blogs
- Costs related to enabling participation for EDI
- Other consumables

3.2.2 Costs usually out of Plus Funds scope:

- Fees for workshops that would usually be supplied by the FLF Development Network
- Salaries of FLF+s and additional staff that would usually be paid for by the institution/organisation
- Equipment, software or projects that the institution/organisation would normally be expected to provide or fund
- Projects that have already been externally funded to 100%
- Individual conference attendance
- Unjustified contingency costs

The above lists are offered as a guide only, any queries about other project costs email should be emailed to hello@flfdevnet.com.

3.2.3 Support and resources provided by the Network

Given the current and ongoing need for distance events in place of face-to-face activities, a range of software, online services, facilitators and background support will be made available by the Network to Plus Fund projects to support FLF+s in running high-quality online events. These costs will usually sit outside the funding requested by Plus Funds applications and be covered centrally. Please contact the Network at hello@flfdevent.com to clarify what support is available and what costs should be requested in the application.

Part 4: Timeline

4.1 Timescales

This is a rolling funding call so applications may be made at any time. Applications submitted by the 10th of each month will usually be reviewed within two weeks. Applications submitted after the 10th of each month may be rolled over to the next meeting of the Plus Funds Review Group.

Applications need to be made well in advance of the proposed activity start date to allow time for: the application to progress, the transfer of funds after decision, any further project planning required once the decision has been communicated to the applicant. Retrospective funding of projects will not be possible.

Applications will close on 1 September 2023, to allow for final accounting and reporting.

Part 5: Application Process

5.1 Application form

To apply for Plus Funds the lead applicant will complete a short *Application Form*, and submit this with any supporting documents via email (hello@flfdevnet.com).

5.2 Initial checks

Applications for use of Plus Funds will be initially reviewed by the Community Manager and/or Project Manager to ensure all sections of the application have been completed. If information is missing, the proposal will be returned to applicant for clarification. After these checks, applicant names and identifying characteristics (including host institutions) will be removed to ensure anonymity. Each application will be checked by the Project Lead for EDI, to ensure EDI impacts and unconscious bias have been considered. The Project manager will also check against scope, to ensure the application meets the aims of the fund.

Applications that are out of scope will not be fully assessed against the scoring criteria by the review group but feedback will still be provided, particularly any suggestions that would bring the application into scope.

Following these initial reviews, applications will be sent to the Review Group for consideration.

5.3 Review Group

Decisions on funding will usually be made by a group of 'peer reviewers', drawn from the Network and FLF+ communities. Usually the applicant will receive a response within six weeks.

Proposals will be considered on a first-come first-serve basis at each Review Group. If there are more applications than the Group can assess in the allocated time, proposals that have been received later may need to roll over into next monthly Review Group.

5.4 Decision making process

All proposals will be assessed against the weighted assessment criteria in the *Application Form* to ensure parity of approach in decision making. Where applications similar in nature or topic to other Plus Funded projects are received, the Review Group reserves the right to suggest collaboration between applicants.

5.5 Review Group decisions

Successful applicants will be informed of the decision by email. Proposals that do not meet the criteria sufficiently will be emailed with reasons for rejection that relate back to the assessment criteria for applications. Re-submission will be permitted once feedback has been addressed. Where appropriate, applicants will be offered support by relevant Network representatives in resubmitting a revised proposal.

Where applicants feel that feedback has been unfair or unclear, they are directed to contact the Community Manager at hello@flfdevnet.com for further information.

Part 6: Successful applications

6.1 Funding process

When an application is successful, a funding confirmation email will be sent to the lead applicant soon after the decision. The lead applicant must confirm acceptance of the funding offer within one week of receiving this email or the offer may be withdrawn. Funding distribution will be overseen by Edinburgh Innovations (EI), and will be paid to the Lead Applicant.

The funding must be used for the purpose awarded and should be spent at the close of the project.

- Any funds remaining (over £100) at the end of the proposed activity must be returned to the Plus Funds team.
- Equipment or fixed assets purchased will remain the property of the FLF Development Network

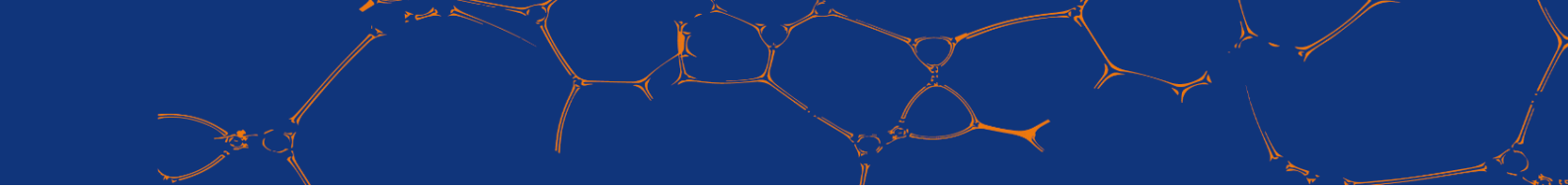
6.2 Additional documentation

On the successful award of funding, the lead applicant may be asked to provide additional information required for the Network's UKRI reporting commitments (for example, number of participants in proposed activity).

Applicants may also be asked to provide a blog and/or video about their project for use on the FLF Development Network website.

6.3 Review points

Lead applicants for funded applications will be asked to complete brief monthly update surveys to include progress against predicted milestones/spend/impact, as well as overall RAG (red/amber/green) status for their project. PIs are also expected to submit brief



updates on spend against budget in their monthly reporting and provide receipts for costs incurred.

At the close of the proposed activity, the lead applicant will be asked to complete a *Final Review* to be returned within one month by email to hello@flfdevnet.com. This will include:

- Impacts, outputs and outcomes
- Review of EDI considerations and the efficacy of any mitigation taken
- End-of-project financial report (including receipts)

6.4 Acknowledgement

Where possible the support of the FLF Development Network should be acknowledged e.g. on websites/blogs, printed materials, event marketing.

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