

# EDICa Flexible Fund FAQs

## Round 2

*Last updated: 19 March 2024*

### **How will my application be assessed?**

This is a two-phase process. A diverse college of academic reviewers recruited for the purpose will first conduct a double-blind peer review of each application. These peer review reports will then feed into a ranking by a review panel consisting of EDICa's academic leadership and an observer from one of our UKRI funders. The observer will not partake in the discussions but will provide feedback on the process afterwards so that lessons can be drawn on best EDI practices going forwards. This way, our Flexible Fund rounds also work as a learning process.

### **Who sits on the review panel?**

As mentioned, this will be the academic leadership of the EDI Caucus. In the first round of the Flexible Fund, it consisted of Prof Robert MacIntosh who has an engineering background. Prof Jemina Napier and Dr James Richards are both organisational researchers, and Dr Catherine Souch works for the Royal Geographical Society. The review panel for the second round of the Flexible Fund will overlap significantly with that of the first.

### **What should the EDI plan required for applications consist of?**

Applicants should clarify how they intend to address EDI concerns. These may include the composition of and support for the research team and partners as well as the recruitment of research participants, research ethics, etc. EDICa's own [EDI plan](#) is on the website and could serve as a source of inspiration in this respect.

### **Who can be a lead applicant?**

This can be anyone who is otherwise eligible to obtain funding from UKRI schemes. Given the nature of the EDI Caucus, there is a mild preference for underrepresented and marginalised groups, as well as Early Career Researchers (ECRs) acting as lead applicants (rather than merely as co-investigators or as research subjects).

### **Can research-adjacent colleagues, i.e. those based in research offices, lead bids?**

A bid led by a person in professional services was considered in the first round of the Flexible Fund, but there are some eligibility criteria from UKRI funders to be considered. In cases of doubt, it is advisable to reach out to EDICa for an ad hoc check. It is EDICa's objective to be as inclusive as possible inviting bids.

**Can you clarify what assessors will be looking for in terms of budgeting?**

Value for money is one among a number of criteria that will be considered during assessment. There are no specific thresholds in place here, but clarity, proportionality and realism in costing are key. It should also be borne in mind that while there are no specific budgetary limits in place, EDICa does aim to fund a variety of projects, rather than only one or two large and expensive ones. This is to be kept in mind when applying. In the first round, four projects were selected for funding.

**What is the weight of cross-sectionality and interdisciplinarity in the assessment of proposals?**

The elements are not mandatory, but given the nature of the research and innovation system in the UK, we are interested in proposals that have as wide, generalisable, and impactful a set of consequences as possible. Cutting across sectors and disciplines is therefore warmly encouraged, but generalisable research conclusions within sectors can be equally valuable.

**How should the double blinded peer review process be borne in mind in drafting my application?**

Some guidance is provided in the application documents in this respect. The proposal should not overly be written in a way that easily or often identifies the authors. Clear identifiers will be redacted before sending applications out to peer reviewers. If you have questions about this, please reach out to EDICa ahead of submitting.

**EDI research is often practice-oriented. Is this a requirement?**

The EDI Caucus's and its Flexible Fund's central aim is to be impactful. This can take on a variety of forms, from concrete policy recommendation to generalisable theoretical and empirical insights. Theoretically informed work is certainly thus not a competitive disadvantage, but the focus should be on the elastic concept of impact.

**What kinds of outputs is EDICa looking for?**

Outputs can take on a variety of forms. Traditional academic outputs (e.g. peer review journal articles) are one such form, but projects that focus more on alternative forms of dissemination (e.g. vlogs, live events, etc.) are very welcome too. The previous round of the Flexible Fund includes outputs to do with film, blogging, and community events, for example.

**Are resubmissions with adjusted projects and/or scaled down budgets possible?**

Given that each call of the Flexible Fund pertains to a different thematic part of EDICa's research, resubmissions after mild adjustments of this kind are not encouraged. The call for Expressions of Interest is meant to help prospective applicants align their projects with the aims and needs of EDICa.

**Can applications build on existing initiatives?**

Yes, they can. Extensions of existing and previously funded work are eligible. The case for doing so would have to be compelling, however. It bears keeping in mind that EDICa does favour applicants from researchers and types of research who/that have fewer opportunities to attract funding otherwise and elsewhere.

**Are there budgetary limits on researchers or types of research requiring special assistance pertaining to disability?**

On top of the research money available, the EDICa has allocated £50,000 for all three rounds of the Flexible Fund to facilitate special needs of this kind. This sum can also be used to make outputs more widely available (through BSL, for example).

**Where can we get more info on co-design?**

Helpful resources on co-design can be found [here](#)

**What if I have a good research idea, but no familiarity with relevant partners?**

In this case, please send an email to [edicaucus@hw.ac.uk](mailto:edicaucus@hw.ac.uk), and we can see if we are aware of any relevant partners you may contact to apply with. We cannot guarantee a match in this respect, but are willing to help where we can.

**What levels of funding will be awarded?**

Projects funded in the first round of the Flexible Fund ranged from £76,000 to £103,000. Each round of the fund will be awarded roughly one third of the total £1,000,000 available.

**Can there be more than one PI?**

The general rule is that there can be one Principal Investigator and that there can be multiple Co-Investigators. If there is a need to deviate from this model, please contact the EDICa team and specify that need, so we can take it into consideration.

**Do the proposed interventions that come out of the research have to be implemented by the end of the research project?**

No, not necessarily. Realistically, this may not always be possible inside the 12-month research period.

**Do proposals have to cover all EDI characteristics?**

No, it could focus on just one and bring in intersectionality. However, please do consider how generalisability to other settings, disciplines and characteristics may apply.

**Is there scope to extend the funding period beyond a year under specific circumstances?**

Ideally, this would only rarely be the case since there are three consecutive rounds of the Flexible Fund. However, this will certainly be considered under specific circumstances. We suggest contacting the EDICA team in this respect, so that an ad hoc answer can be provided in consultation with the funding consortium.