

EPSRC NECEM Second Call for Proposals: Joint Projects

We are delighted to announce NECEM's second call for proposals to its Research Fund. Please feel free to distribute the call's information to relevant networks/partners. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us: Justina.Heslop@newcastle.ac.uk.

The North East Centre for Energy Materials (NECEM), formed between the universities of Newcastle, Durham and Northumbria, seeks to unite the broad range of expertise present at the three sites to tackle a grand challenge of energy materials and will make it possible to cooperate widely with local, national and international industry. The main focus of NECEM will be to address one of the most fundamentally critical elements of all energy systems, namely the interfaces between the materials within it and their interaction with the environment in which they operate. The assets of NECEM include the breadth of expertise within marine energy (tidal and wave energy), solar (photovoltaic and solar fuels by photo-electrochemistry), fuel cells (hydrogen and alcohol based, also enzymatic and microbial), energy storage (Li-Ion, redox-flow batteries), biomass (gasification, fermentation and direct conversion to heat or even electricity) and local smart grid structure (with concurrent production and consumption of renewable energy).

Call Headline Details

Maximum proposal value	£120 000 (full FEC)
Funding level	80% of FEC
Call for proposals goes live	20 December 2020
Deadline for applications	3 February 2020
Management Committee shortlisting	5 February 2020
Applicants advised on outcome of application	12 February
Expected start date for projects	1 April 2020
Project delivery (latest dates)	31 March 2021

About this call

This fund aims to facilitate collaborations with other centres of excellence, for example the other energy materials centres, to add value to exciting and unexpected new discoveries arising from NECEM.

The core aim of the North East Centre for Energy Materials (NECEM), is to develop step-changing technologies by understanding and controlling of the assembly of atoms and molecules at surfaces and interfaces of energy materials. This adventurous and interdisciplinary Energy Materials Research Centre will work closely with Industry to identify problems and opportunities that affect the stability, cost or performance of various Energy Systems.

The budget outline for the proposed project can include directly incurred and associated indirect costs only, such as PDRA time and associated consumables. It does not cover investigator time, which should be covered by the existing NECEM grant in the case of named investigators. We have up to 18 months researcher time and £15k consumables available for this call. Staff time for investigators not already funded under the parent NECEM award will need to be provided from another source. Travel and subsistence appropriate to delivery of the project and small items of

equipment (<£10k) are eligible, following EPSRC standard conditions.
<https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/>

Applicants are asked to make submissions for work that can be delivered within 12 months. There is no scope for extensions. Costings for the proposals should be based on standard EPSRC rules.² As the grant holder, Newcastle University is responsible for allocating funding to successful proposals and will reimburse subcontracting organisations at 80% full economic costing. Academic institutions will be required to itemise bills based on 100% FEC and then invoice at 80% FEC.

More information on our research and on previously funded research projects are available on our website <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/necem/>

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/>²

Eligibility

This call is open to all academic staff at Newcastle, Northumbria and Durham Universities engaged in research into or relating to advanced materials for renewable energy generation and who are eligible for EPSRC support¹. The project must have an external academic or industry partner who makes a meaningful contribution to the project. Project leads on Exploratory Projects are not eligible to apply as PIs, but may be included in a proposal as CoIs, with their role clearly indicated in the proposal as advisory/supportive to the PI.

Proposals will be expected to align with and contribute to the themes of NECEM and be interdisciplinary in their ambition and outcomes. It is expected that PDRAs funded will be hosted at one of the three leading universities (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria), but are expected to spend some period of the project visiting partner facilities, which may include collaborating with other centres.

Directly incurred costs and associated indirect costs only are eligible for this call. Funding for engagement activities is also eligible.

Potential applicants should contact NECEM in advance of the submission deadline if they have any queries concerning their eligibility. No sub-contracting is allowed.

Individuals may submit no more than one proposal as a Principle Investigator plus one as a Co-investigator, or two as Co-Investigator, to this call.

¹<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/>

Equal Opportunities

NECEM and EPSRC support the value and diversity of their staff and stakeholders, enabling all to realise their full potential by valuing the contribution of everyone and recognising and harnessing the benefits that differences can bring. The UK Research Councils are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups in all of their relevant functions.

Further details are available from EPSRC: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/about/standards/equalopps/>

Research Call Arrangements

The full proposal should be a PDF document and will consist of: track record and capacity to deliver (1 page); case for support (2 pages), including research challenge, novelty and timeliness, aims and objectives, programme of work including methodology, tasks and deliverables; pathways to impact and outreach (1 page), management, work-plan and budget (1 page). Applications must be based on 100% FEC and show the contribution to be made by the grant (80% FEC).

As a guideline, there is a total of 18 months researcher time and £15k consumables available.

Review Process and Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed by the whole [NECEM management committee](#) and subsequently ratified by the Industrial Advisory Board. Finally, Newcastle University Finance Project Support Team will go through the costs associated with each project, check their eligibility according to EPSRC guidelines and the terms and conditions of the NECEM award.

The criteria against which proposals will be assessed includes, but not be limited to:

- Collaboration with other institutions
- Demonstrated excellence and ability to deliver
- Novelty and quality of the proposed research
- Complementary fit to the current programme and additionality
- Industry and additional engagement; letter of support
- Potential for impact

Prior to award, adjustments to the costings may be required in order to maximise the outcomes.

Submitting proposals and deadline

The deadline for submission of proposals: **6pm on 3 February 2020**. Proposals should be submitted to Justina.Heslop@newcastle.ac.uk.

Expectations for successful proposals

Successful applicants will be expected to contribute to quarterly reports requested by EPSRC. A final summary report will be required on completion of the project.

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this call for proposals, please contact

Justina.heslop@newcastle.ac.uk

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