



Digital Research Infrastructure Programme Phase 1b Project Guidance: Isambard

Key dates

Activity	Date
Deadline for Full Proposal	28 October 2022
Peer review comments received	04 Nov 2022
Assurance Process: Assessed by Strategic Equipment panel	29-30 November 2022
Funding decision and feedback	December 2022

Summary

The UKRI Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) Strategy and programme was approved by UKRI's Executive Committee in May 2021. EPSRC has been allocated funds for activities in FY 22/23 and into FY 23/24 for phase 1b of the DRI programme. UKRI DRI Phase 1b projects expand upon and complement pilot projects and capability improvements funded in phase 1a.

EPSRC are inviting DRI activities for phase 1b *via* the Large Research Infrastructure call in Je-S. The Isambard proposal will undergo an assurance process by assessment from postal peer review followed by assessment at the November Strategic Equipment panel, who will provide a recommendation to EPSRC on whether to award funding, whether amendments are required before funding can be awarded, or if funding is not recommended.

Main objectives

- To expand the capacity and scientific reach of the national network of HPC provision throughout the UKRI by enhancing access to the wider UK research community, addressing the broader DRI goal of ensuring that the compute infrastructure meets the existing and future ambitions of UKRI's research and innovation communities.
- Provide access to HPC containing new, cutting-edge technologies in processor, storage, memory, interconnect and HPC components in order to enable research communities to prepare for possible future architectures including the future-proofing of codes.
- Maintain the architectural diversity of the national network of compute infrastructure, consistent with the diverse requirements of the research community and the emergence of new technologies.
- Enable a more fluid migration of scientific research between the UK HPC ecosystem across UKRI communities, creating an interoperable environment where code is more easily portable, accelerating the time to impact for outputs and benefits.

- Integrate the new service into the wider HPC ecosystem across the UK.
- Promote and enhance computational science skills development.
- Establish collaborative relationships with academic and industrial partners in the UK and internationally that benefit the UK research and innovation community.
- Encourage and support multi-disciplinary research endeavours, in particular, in line with the broader DRI programme to break down disciplinary boundaries, while respecting the diversity, expertise and cultures of disciplinary communities

Expected outputs

The service funded in this call will be required to:

- Provide a dedicated high performance computing service owned and managed by an institution or a consortium of institutions, with access mechanisms designed to permit a wide range of user access for scientific research, computational science and software development.
- Partner with UKRI and other Tier-1 and Tier-2 service providers to develop and implement standardised mechanisms and processes for the distribution and trading of compute cycles and resources in order to form an integrated national capability.
- Have a governance and management structure that enables access to a broad range of users from academia and industry based on suitable arrangements for free access, in-kind payment and/or direct reimbursement.
- Each future service will need to have an active research community and be in a significant geographical region for HPC, such that a broad community of users will have access to relevant and innovative local digital infrastructure for their needs.
- Plan to develop and maintain a computational science and engineering function, such that software and skills development is part of the role of the service.

Funding available

For Isambard, the funding available is up to **£4.5M**. Funding can be requested for capital or resource costs. EPSRC will fund 80% of the project's full economic cost, except for capital costs, which will be funded at 100%.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The long term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent and the Research Councils have together developed the ambitious UK Research and Innovation Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/skills/action-plan-edi-2016/>

In line with the UK Research and Innovation Diversity Principles, EPSRC expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice. We are committed to supporting the research community in the diverse ways a research career can be built with our investments. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible

working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who job share, have a part-time contract, need flexible working arrangements or those currently committed to other longer, large existing grants. Please see our Equality and Diversity webpages <https://www.epsrc.ukri.org/funding/equalitydiversity/> for further information.

How to apply

Submitting an application

You should prepare and submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>).

When adding a new proposal, you should select:

- Council 'EPSRC'
- Document type 'Standard Proposal'
- Scheme 'Standard'
- On the Project Details page you should select the 'Large Research Infrastructure' call.

Note that clicking 'submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to EPSRC. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date. EPSRC must receive your application by **28 October 2022**.

As well as the Je-S application form, the following documents must be submitted.

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors. They should be completed in single-spaced Arial 11 font or similar-sized sans serif typeface.

Case for Support (mandatory, up to 8 sides of A4)

The case for support should include details of the proposed activities, including how these will contribute to the UKRI DRI strategy themes.

Justification of the resources requested (mandatory, up to 2 sides of A4)

Work plan (mandatory, up to 1 side of A4)

CVs (if relevant, up to 2 sides of A4 each)

For named researchers or visiting researchers only, not the PI or Co-Is.

Statements of support from any project partners (if relevant, no page limit)

Project partners must be making a contribution to the proposal which should have an approximate financial value attached to it, this should not be £0/£1.

The host organisation cannot be a project partner. Where other universities are closely involved they should usually be represented as appropriate Co-Is, not as project partners.

Funding requested for project partners for travel and subsistence costs is now an eligible cost.

Quotes for equipment (if relevant, no page limit)

Please be aware that quotes are **not** seen by the panel. As such they are not required by the deadline and may be provided separately at a later date.

- A minimum of three written quotes are required for any piece of equipment costing £138,000 or above. Prior to providing quotes, please remove the pages of standard terms and conditions from each quote. If there are fewer than three suppliers, this should be mentioned when quotes are provided.
- A minimum of three verbal quotes are required for items costing £25K-£138K. If there are fewer than three suppliers, this should be mentioned when quotes are provided.

Further Guidance

Read our [advice on writing proposals \(EPSRC\)](#).

EPSRC will not fund a project if it believes that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for. All relevant parts of the ethical information section must be completed.

Read further [guidance on the ethical information section of the Je-S form](#).

EPSRC guidance can be found under Additional information.

Assessment

Assessment process

The full proposal will be assessed by postal peer review. It will then be considered as part of the November Strategic Equipment panel. The panel will make a recommendation to EPSRC regarding the award of DRI phase 1b funding. Criteria will be scored with the following definitions:

A = Meets all the criteria and funding should be awarded.

B = Partially meets the assessment criteria and requires further clarification on activities proposed before funding can be awarded.

C = Insufficient fit to criteria and needs major alterations before funding can be awarded.

Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following assessment criteria:

- The degree to which the proposed activities will benefit new or current research and innovation communities of practice.
- The value for money of the proposed activities.
- The contribution of the proposed activities to the UKRI DRI strategic themes.
- The degree to which risks to delivery have been mitigated.
- The degree to which the proposed activity has considered sustainable best practises such as within the procurement process and with user efficiencies.

Applicants will be provided with brief feedback after the panel.

Contacts

