PETRAS Internal Strategic Projects and Engagement Fund (ISPEF) Call for Proposals – Frequently Asked Questions:

Last updated: 4ᵗʰ October 2021
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General Enquiries

NOTE: This call is internal to PETRAS and only open to applications from the Centre's existing academic partners.

Where can I find the call's terms and conditions?
Please refer to section on "Grant Conditions" in the ISPEF Call for Proposals Guidance document.

What format should my application be in?
All applications to be completed electronically via the submit.com submission system by the call deadline. Please refer to section on "How to Apply" in the ISPEF Call for Proposals Guidance document for further details.

When is the deadline for applications?
The deadline for the applications is 09.00 BST on 8ᵗʰ October 2021.

I have a question that is not covered here, who do I ask?
Please submit your queries via email to petras-proposals@ucl.ac.uk, and clearly state that your query is in relation to the "ISPEF Call for Proposals". The deadline to submit your ISPEF call related questions and queries is 1ˢᵗ October 2021 at 5.00 pm.

Questions from Current and Previous Calls
The following questions have been adapted from previous PETRAS call for proposals' enquiries as well as queries that are being submitted by enquirers to this call.

Multiple Bids

Is it possible to apply as a PI on one application to ISPEF call and a CoI on another?
Yes, this call allows the applicants to submit multiple bids, where they can be named as PIs and/or CoIs.

Are we able to name more than one PI and CoI in our application? If yes, can one PI or CoI be based abroad if the others are in the UK?
For each proposal, the applicants can name only one UK-based PI (who is eligible to hold an EPSRC grant), and one or more CoIs: either UK-based and/or overseas (providing PETRAS is not funding an overseas CoI in any way). For those applications, where CoIs are also intending to request PETRAS funding through this call, both PI and CoIs need to be UK-based and eligible to hold EPSRC grants. For further information on the eligibility of individuals and institutions to receive EPSRC funding, see the following EPSRC Guides:
Individuals:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/.
Institutions:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/organisations/.

In all instances, the applicants that require PETRAS funding through this call for proposals must be employed by one of <u>the Centre's existing academic partners.</u>

Can more than one user edit an application, i.e., can a user give 'editor access' to a colleague who is also working on the proposal?
Unfortunately, this is not possible at the moment as each application is tied to the registered account. Therefore, it will be the responsibility of the main applicant (PI) to register on the system, complete the application form and submit their joint application through the online system by the call's deadline. A web link to download a PDF of the application form questions (not editable) can be found on the ISPEF call for Full Proposals Guidance Document which can be shared with the consortium members to coordinate their inputs.

Is there a limit for the number of applications we can submit from a university? We want to submit multiple proposals to this call.
There is no limit for number of applications that can be submitted from a single university. Also, this call allows the applicants to submit multiple bids, where they can be named as PIs and/or CoIs.

Am I allowed to be named in multiple proposals as a PI as well as a CoI?
Yes, this call allows the applicants to submit multiple proposals, where they can be named as PIs and/or CoIs.

The PETRAS proposals system doesn't support multiple logins working on a proposal. Since PIs are notoriously busy, it makes sense if someone else actually does the work of entering the proposal (with a different email address from the PI). Please would you confirm that this is acceptable?
It is acceptable for other colleagues to create login details and undertake administrative tasks of preparing/submitting a proposal on proposed PIs' behalf. However, the PIs will have the ultimate responsibility and sign-off of their proposal submission before/by the call's deadline.

Collaborator Eligibility

We have a couple of collaborators for our proposal idea in mind but not all of them (including ourselves) are based at UK universities. Is it a requirement to have a UK institution involved?
This is an internal call for proposals only open to existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations (please see https://petras-iot.org/about-us/, for list of our academic partners). Applications must be led by a UK-based PI eligible to hold an EPSRC grant and supported by UK-based and/or overseas CoI(s) (providing PETRAS is not funding an overseas CoI in any way). Hence, if you are not eligible to receive funding through this call, you should consider partnering with existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations to join their bid as an unfunded partner.

For further information on the eligibility of individuals and institutions to receive EPSRC funding, see the following EPSRC Guides:
Individuals:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/.
Institutions:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/organisations/.

Related to the previous question: Are existing PETRAS members allowed to co-apply for funding calls as PI or CoIs? How about PDRAs? Some of our collaborators would fall under that category.

Existing PETRAS researchers are allowed to apply for funding providing they are able to meet the eligibility criteria. In particular, all applicants and named research staff must be able to meet the time commitment to the proposed work as stated in the proposal (i.e., for PI and CoI roles, the applicants' joint PETRAS-funded contribution cannot exceed 0.1 FTE per application, and for PDRAs, it cannot exceed 1 FTE across).

Is there a preference for named researchers to be targeted for hiring in the proposal?
The Centre is making total funds available of up to £475k to fund projects with duration of 6 months, allowing 6-month PDRA deployments where necessary. In the interests of continuity, it is expected that such PDRA deployments will be filled by existing staff with relevant expertise. They may or may not have previously worked on PETRAS projects.

What are the User Partners being referred to in the ISPEF call guidance document?
A User Partner (aka project partner) is a collaborating organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed work. This may include in-kind or cash contributions such as expertise, staff time, use of facilities, etc.

User Partners cannot receive funding from the PETRAS ISPEF grant.

If there are User Partners collaborating on a proposed project, EPSRC requires a Letter of Support, which is also required for the ISPEF call. Well-written letters can significantly strengthen the proposals by demonstrating the benefits of the collaboration, and the potential impacts of the activities to be funded. It also allows partners to highlight why they support the proposal, and what they hope to get out of it.

Please refer to EPSRC's project partners description for further details:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/lettersofsupport/

Can we apply collaboratively with other institutions?
Yes, you can submit individually or in conjunction as part of a team (with proposed contributions from a single institution or a consortium). In addition, all applicants will be expected to work with user partner(s) in the development and if successful in the delivery of the proposed work.

This is an internal call for proposals only open to existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations (please see https://petras-iot.org/about-us/, for list of our academic partners). Applications must be led by a UK-based PI eligible to hold an EPSRC grant and supported by UK-based and/or overseas CoI(s) (providing PETRAS is not funding an overseas CoI in any way). Hence, if you are not eligible to receive funding through this call, you should consider partnering with existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations to join their bid as an unfunded partner.

For collaborative activities, where proposed CoIs are also requesting PETRAS funding through this call, both PI and CoIs need to be from one of the existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations, who are eligible to hold an EPSRC grant.

Is there a minimum/mandated level of commitment to be secured from the proposed User partners for our project?
There is no mandated level of commitment required to be secured from user partners, however the aspiration should be to get as close to "matched funding" as possible. This includes everything including provision of software, participation in-kind etc.

Can a new proposed User Partner be from outside the UK?
Providing PETRAS is not funding an overseas collaborator in any way, they are welcome to join the PETRAS activity as a User Partner.

Do you have a list of PETRAS Centre user partners and contact details of the corresponding person at each organisation? And, is there a preference for a user partner to be participating in PETRAS Centre? Or is there an option to get match funding from a user partner that is not in PETRAS Centre?

Yes, there are existing PETRAS Centre User Partners. Please see the following web page for further details: https://petras-iot.org/collaborate/. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide you individual contact details of the User Partners due to GDPR. However, if you have a specific institution in mind from this list that you would like to be put in touch with, please let us know and we will let them know of your interest. Please note PETRAS cannot guarantee that you will receive a response from user partners. Therefore, you are strongly advised to have alternative plans in place to ensure your ISPEF application is completed and submitted timely as per the call guidance document specifications.

When applying to this call, you can choose to collaborate with existing or new user partners. There is no preference on this. New User Partner applicants are welcomed from any sector, including commercial businesses, charities, trade and advocacy groups, local and central government, law enforcement, and other government agencies.

Could you tell me if User Partners must come from the list of PETRAS partners here: https://petras-iot.org/collaborate/ ? We have several organisations interested in a potential proposal, but some are not on that list.

When applying to this call, you can choose to collaborate with existing or new user partners. There is no preference on this.

Is it mandatory to have partnerships between one HEI and one company? Or can a member of HEI submit a proposal without any company?

Each project should involve at least one, new or existing, User Partner(s) from industry and/or the public sector, with strong interests in the Centre's research programme. Proposals must be co-created with the User Partner(s) and be convincing in the depth of the partner commitment. The applicants must clearly demonstrate practitioner experience in their proposed research team, which will need to include User Partners. Whilst matched funding is not essential, it is highly recommended. A clear Letter of Support should be provided for each listed partner detailing their contributions and how they will actually collaborate in the work.

Projects must be led by a PI from one of the existing PETRAS academic partner universities, who is eligible to hold an EPSRC grant. If proposed CoIs are also requesting PETRAS funding through this call, the CoIs also need to be from one of the existing PETRAS academic partner universities, who are eligible to hold an EPSRC grant. The PI will be responsible for the delivery of the proposed work and required reporting requirements.

Is it mandatory to talk with the existing PETRAS user partners before submitting a proposal?

When applying to this call, you can choose to collaborate with existing or new user partners. There is no preference on this. New User Partner applicants are welcomed from any sector, including commercial businesses, charities, trade and advocacy groups, local and central government, law enforcement, and other government agencies.

I read that a project can involve either existing or new User Partners. Is there any preference from the Panel on which option is better?

When applying to this call, you can choose to collaborate with existing or new user partners. There is no preference on this.

We are planning to submit a proposal to this call, and will be collaborating with two companies as our partners, who are new to PETRAS. How can these companies become PETRAS User Partners (which is a requirement for the call I believe)?

A proposal needs to be led and submitted by an eligible researcher employed by one of <u>the Centre's existing academic partners.</u> The lead partner needs to name their proposed user partners in the proposal and where required, provide what they will do in the proposed project. The proposed user partners do not need to register with PETRAS prior to putting an application in.

The proposed user partners of those applicants that successfully secure funding through this call will become PETRAS User Partners.

Please refer to the rest of the FAQ document for further information on User Partners, including a definition and what role they are expected to play in projects.

Could you please confirm if PDRAs can work together with academics (who are eligible to be PIs or CoIs) on proposal writing and later are assigned with researcher CoI or Co-I role if successful? I am currently working full-time on an EPSRC-funded project as PDRA, so I cannot be a named PDRA for another proposal full time. I want to double check if PETRAS allows PDRAs to be named as PIs/CoIs (or researcher CoIs) if they own the idea and contribute from the beginning like proposal writing? No other funding to be requested but cost for research time.
PETRAS follows EPSRC's Investigator Eligibility policies as detailed through the link below:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/ .
Please contact your institution's research grants office for further advice.

We are planning to submit a proposal to this call. Could you let me know if there are any constraints/issues with having an academic CoI on the project, also working for one of the user partners of the project? More specifically, can a person who has both an academic role and a job in another institution be included in the project as a CoI, even if their non-academic institution for which he/she works at is one of the project partners of the project and he/she is the contact in the user partner institution?
PETRAS follows EPSRC's Investigator Eligibility policies (including CoIs) as detailed through the link below:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/.

Please see the User Partner related definition given in this FAQ document, and also refer to EPSRC's project partners description for further details:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/lettersofsupport/ .

For collaborative activities, where proposed CoIs are also requesting PETRAS funding through this call, both PI and CoIs need to be from one of the existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations, who are eligible to hold an EPSRC grant.

We recommend that you contact your institution's research grants office for further advice on this matter.

Would it be please possible to clarify what role can external partners play in the proposal?
Please refer to the rest of the FAQ document, where the roles of the external partners (User Partners) are specified in detail. User Partners can be from any sector, including commercial businesses, charities, trade and advocacy groups, local and central government, law enforcement, and other government agencies.

We are in the process of submitting a proposal and was wondering whether you could let us know if International SMEs (based in EU or US) are eligible supporting partners.
Providing PETRAS is not funding an overseas collaborator in any way, they are welcome to join the PETRAS activity as a User Partner.

Principal Investigators

Are there specific requirements for the eligibility of PIs? Would they need to be current PIs or could it be someone at the post-doctoral level?

Any applicant with relevant background should be eligible to be an investigator on a proposal for this call if they are employed by one of the PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations (please see https://petras-iot.org/about-us/ for list of our academic partners) and are eligible to be an investigator/co-investigator on an EPSRC grant. There is no requirement for an applicant to have been involved in the PETRAS Centre/Hub activities previously to be able to put an application. If your institution allows your post to be a budget holder, then you can apply as an investigator in your ISPEF proposal. Please contact your institution's research grants office for further advice.

Can any academic from a UK-based institute submit a proposal to the call? Do they need to be on a permanent contract?

This is an internal call for proposals only for existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations (please see https://petras-iot.org/about-us/ for list of our academic partners). Hence, you should only apply if you are employed by one of the PETRAS academic partner universities. With this in mind, any such applicant with relevant background should be eligible to be an investigator on an ISPEF proposal if they are eligible to be an investigator/co-investigator on an EPSRC grant. There is no requirement for an applicant to have been involved in the PETRAS Centre/Hub activities previously to be able to put an application. If your institution allows your post to be a budget holder, then you can apply as an investigator in your ISPEF proposal. Please contact your institution's research grants office for further advice.

I am member of a core PETRAS Centre project. Am I eligible to be PI on an application to the PETRAS ISPEF call?

Yes, existing PETRAS researchers who are working on other Centre funded activities are allowed to apply for funding providing they are able to meet the eligibility criteria. In particular, all applicants and named research staff must be able to meet the time commitment to the project/activity as stated in the proposal (i.e., for PI and CoI roles the applicants' joint PETRAS-funded contribution cannot exceed 0.1 FTE per application, and for PDRAs, it cannot exceed 1 FTE across).

I have got a query about the ISPEF call. I am not an official member of PETRAS, but my university is one of PETRAS's existing academic partners. Am I eligible to be a PI to submit a proposal application to this call?

Any academic/researcher with a suitable background, employed by one of the existing PETRAS Academic Partner universities, who is eligible to be listed as a PI/CoI to EPSRC grants can apply to this call:

"Projects must be led by a PI from one of the existing PETRAS academic partner universities, who is eligible to hold an EPSRC grant. If proposed CoIs are also requesting PETRAS funding through this call, the CoIs also need to be from one of the existing PETRAS academic partner universities, who are eligible to hold an EPSRC grant. The PI will be responsible for the delivery of the proposed work and required reporting requirements. For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/ ."

Applicants do not need to have previously received PETRAS funding to be eligible to apply. Please see the call guidance document for detailed information on the call's eligibility criteria.

I am applying for a 6-month project. I want to include in that dissemination which will take place a few months after the end of the project. Is that okay or does all the work including the dissemination have to be carried out within the 6-month period if it's an 6-month proposal?
The proposed project work and associated expenditure will need to take place between the project's start and end dates, which cannot exceed 6 months.

Eligibility

I am employed by one of the existing partner universities. But, I have not worked with PETRAS before. Can I apply?
Applicants do not need to have previously received PETRAS funding to be eligible to apply. Please see the call guidance document for detailed information on the call's eligibility criteria.

We are interested in submitting a proposal to the PETRAS ISPEF call, however we need to establish whether, being a public body/company, we would be eligible for funding? If it is the case that we are not eligible, and we partner with a University, would our bid then be acceptable?
Please note this is an internal call for proposals only open to existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations (please see https://petras-iot.org/about-us/ for list of our academic partners). Applications must be led by a UK-based PI eligible to hold an EPSRC grant and supported by UK-based and/or overseas CoI(s) (providing PETRAS is not funding an overseas CoI in any way). Hence, if you are not eligible to receive funding through this call, you should consider partnering with existing PETRAS academic partner universities/organisations to join their bid as an unfunded partner.

I had an invitation to potentially be involved in someone else's submission to this call. Can I be involved in more than one application?
Applicants can submit multiple bids to this call, where they can be named as PIs and/or CoIs. A PDRA researcher can also commit to more than one proposal being submitted to this call. In particular, all applicants and named research staff must be able to meet the time commitment to the proposed work as stated in their application (i.e., for PI and CoI roles, the applicants' joint PETRAS-funded contribution cannot exceed 0.1 FTE per application, and for PDRAs, it cannot exceed 1 FTE across).

We are an institute/centre/group within a university, which is already a PETRAS Academic Partner. Are we eligible to apply to this call? Can we become a User Partner?
There are two types of PETRAS membership: User Partners and Academic Partners.

User Partners are (see the rest of the FAQ document for detailed definition of User Partners):
• Recipients/beneficiaries of PETRAS research partner deliverables, and may contribute cash or in-kind value to promote and inform our research;
• Not eligible to receive any EPSRC-provided funding from PETRAS (although they may receive benefits such as knowledge and secondees).

Hence, your group could be a User Partner if they are a separate legal entity, but not if they are an institute (or similar) under a HEI/University, which is already a PETRAS Academic Partner.

The benefits of being a PETRAS Academic Partner, which are a superset of User Partnership benefits include:

- URB invitations (PETRAS's bi-annual events);
- Newsletter and other ad-hoc communications;
- Access to bid for Internal PETRAS Calls for proposals;
- Access to PDRA training and other research cohort activities.

If your HEI/University (must be already a PETRAS Academic Partner) allows you to be a part of an EPSRC grant application (we cannot comment on individual groups' eligibility), then you can submit an application to this call as part of their bid. However, you must ensure that you cost your project(s) using the same process as you would cost an EPSRC grant. Please see the following reference material for EPSRC funding guide and UKRI T&Cs for Research Council fEC Grants:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/ and
https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.

Does the call require PDRAs to have obtained a PhD? I am into the 4th year of my PhD, but I will not complete it before the beginning of the project.
Under normal circumstances, it is expected that the PDRAs (Post-Doctoral Research Associates) to be named/employed through these project/activity proposals already hold their PhDs or be very close to securing it i.e., waiting for their viva or award of the degree from their university. We suggest that you contact your institution's research grants office for further advice on this to ensure compliance with the EPSRC finance policies and rules.

Finance, project planning and setup

What are the costs allowed for our ISPEF proposal budget? Can we add staff time to our project budget for the PI and each CoI named in our proposal for their time? How about the research fellows?
Costs under a new project may include UK-based staff time for PIs and CoIs (up to 0.1 FTE equivalent combined) and PDRA(s), associated indirect and estates costs, travel and subsistence, plus consumables and equipment for the project, all subject to EPSRC rules and requirements. The project costs can also include meetings and workshops as required. Equipment over £10,000 in value (incl. VAT) is not available through this call. Equipment funding specific to the project up to 10% of the value of the grant, or under £10,000 (incl. VAT), whichever is the lesser, is allowable. Resources to fund Project User Partners are not allowable (this includes sub-contracting to a User Partner).

Time commitments of the PDRAs cannot exceed 1 FTE across total number of projects they are on. If successful, the applicants' institutions will be expected to provide complimentary 0.1 FTE of investigator time (PI & CoI time) to match the 0.1 FTE PETRAS is providing as part of this call.

Is there a set allocation of funding/budget for a six-month project/activity under this call?
No, there is not a set allocation per project. Total PETRAS funding available for the ISPEF call is c. £594k Full Economic Cost (fEC), or £475k @ 80% fEC. We expect to fund approximately 4-8 projects. The applicants must state the funding required for their proposed projects.

Can the requested funds be used to buy out our time and also to hire a research associate, if it is within the available budget?
All applicants should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an EPSRC grant. Please see the following reference material for EPSRC funding guide and UKRI T&Cs for Research Council fEC Grants:

https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/ and
https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.
We would anticipate that your research support office will be able to advise on this.

We are working with colleagues to develop a proposal for the PETRAS ISPEF call. Could I please check what are the eligibile costs that could be requested? Are these same as the EPSRC proposals (i.e. publication costs are not eligible)?
All applicants should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an EPSRC grant.

Eligible costs include: Costs under a new project may include UK-based staff time for PIs and CoIs (up to 0.1 FTE equivalent combined) and postdoctoral PDRA(s), associated indirect and estates costs, travel and subsistence, plus consumables and equipment for the project, all subject to EPSRC rules and requirements. The project costs can also include meetings and workshops as required. Equipment over £10,000 in value (incl. VAT) is not available through this call. Equipment funding specific to the project up to 10% of the value of the grant, or under £10,000 (incl. VAT), whichever is the lesser, is allowable. Resources to fund Project User Partners are not allowable (this includes sub-contracting to a User Partner).

If successful, the applicants' institutions will be expected to provide complimentary 0.1 FTE of investigator time (PI & CoI time) to match the 0.1 FTE PETRAS is providing as part of this call.

In the call guidance document, you state that a project should last no longer than 6 months. Can I confirm that this is for conduct of the research/demonstration itself? Is it acceptable that preparation, analysis and writing up would be either side of the 6-month period (completing the research in more than 6 months)?
The proposed project work and associated expenditure will need to take place between the project's start and end dates, which cannot exceed 6 months.

Could you confirm if admin time is an eligible cost on this call? I can't see anything in the guidance regarding admin time, but we have previously included this in another application to PETRAS.
Normally admin time is not an eligible cost on this call, which is expected to be covered by the indirect costs of your project budget.

Could we use maximum of £10k to purchase software for the project?
Equipment over £10,000 in value (incl. VAT) is not available through this call. Equipment funding specific to the project up to 10% of the value of the grant, or under £10,000 (incl. VAT), whichever is the lesser, is allowable. All applicants should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an EPSRC grant.
Please see the following reference material for EPSRC funding guide and UKRI T&Cs for Research Council fEC Grants:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/ and
https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.
We would anticipate that your research support office will be able to advise on this.

If funded, what's the latest date our project could start?
Applicants are expected to start their projects in January 2022 and complete their work by no later than end of March 2023. The end dates of the projects will depend on their proposed duration and start dates, however, it must be noted that projects cannot have end dates later than March 2023.

The ISPEF call guidance document says that "Applicants must seek approval from their organisation prior to submission". Could you please give more details what kind of approval is required? Is it only for eligibility check or a letter is required?

Your host institution needs to be aware of your application and are content with it to be submitted. The approval processes might differ from one organisation to another, and may involve departmental, faculty, or university level approval. We do not need the applicants to provide PETRAS with any confirmatory letters/notes on this. All applicants will be required to provide budget breakdowns from their organisations' financial systems, which will need to be checked and approved by their institutions.

We are preparing a grant proposal in collaboration with a business partner. Will the PETRAS ISPEF grant cover costs associated to travel for the business partner?
All applicants should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an EPSRC grant. Please see the following reference material for EPSRC funding guide and UKRI T&Cs for Research Council fEC Grants:
https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/ and https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.
We would anticipate that your research support office will be able to advise on this.

Costs under a new project may include UK-based staff time for PIs and CoIs (up to 0.1 FTE equivalent combined) and PDRA(s), associated indirect and estates costs, travel and subsistence, plus consumables and equipment for the project, all subject to EPSRC rules and requirements. The project costs can also include meetings and workshops as required. Equipment over £10,000 in value (incl. VAT) is not available through this call. Equipment funding specific to the project up to 10% of the value of the grant, or under £10,000 (incl. VAT), whichever is the lesser, is allowable. Resources to fund Project User Partners are not allowable (this includes sub-contracting to a User Partner).

Hence, PETRAS funding cannot be used to cover any costs of Business/User Partners including travel expenses.

Is there any budget restriction for each project? For example, a project cannot be more than £300K etc.?
No, there is not a set allocation per project. Total PETRAS funding available for the ISPEF call is c. £594k Full Economic Cost (fEC), or £475k @ 80% fEC. We expect to fund approximately 4-8 projects. The applicants must state the funding required for their proposed projects.

We are currently developing a proposal for this call and have a cybersecurity expert (he's runs his own microbusiness) whose expertise the project would really benefit from. Unfortunately, he is not in a position to offer all of his time for free; would he be eligible for partial renumeration for this time?
Unfortunately, it will not be possible to use the grant funding for renumeration of the expert mentioned above as it is not in line with EPSRC funding policies.

Could you please confirm that PETRAS expects the partner universities to match the staff time allocation for PIs and CoIs?
The PI and CoI staff time allocated for the proposal (for those components being requested to be funded by PETRAS) would be expected to be matched by the applicant's institution. For example, if an applicant's budget included a staff time for PI (and where applicable CoI(s)) at 0.1FTE, then another 0.1FTE would have to be provided elsewhere/by applicant's institution.

We are planning to submit a proposal to this call and would like to clarify the position on the eligible allocation of staff time for the PI / CoI team. We understand from the call guidelines and FAQ documentation that we can include up to 0.1 FTE allocation for the team – is this for the entire length of the project, i.e., for 6 months?

The staff time for the PI/CoI up to 0.1FTE should represent the time the staff will be on the full length of the project. The PI/CoI must not exceed 100% of FTE is claimed as salary for any individual across all proposals funded by the Research Councils. Link: https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/directlyallocatedcosts/

The PI and CoI staff time allocated for the proposal (for those components being requested to be funded by PETRAS) would be expected to be matched by the applicant's institution. For example, if an applicant's budget included a staff time for PI (and where applicable CoI(s)) at 0.1FTE, then another 0.1FTE would have to be provided elsewhere/by applicant's institution.

The FAQ for this funding call states that the funding is based on the EPSRC model. Can I please check that if the project is awarded, the award amount will include indexation (as is the case for EPSRC grants)? If not, should we include this as part of our cost estimation?
As FAQ states, the funding is based on the EPSRC model. Projects awarded amount will not include the indexation and this should be included in the cost estimation which is submitted.

I wanted to double check cost eligibility under DI costs: (a) it was equipment that was limited to £10k right? (b) but there is no limit to travel & subsistence, right?
The equipment budget requests are limited to £10k (including VAT) or 10% of the value of the grant, whichever is the lesser. For the travel & subsistence costs, there are no upper limits imposed, however these have to be within the rules of EPSRC and your university financial regulations.

Am I eligible to apply for funding as a Researcher Co-I to this call for proposals?
PETRAS follows EPSRC's Investigator Eligibility policies (including CoIs) as detailed through the link below:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/.
Hence, the applicants will need to ensure that they check and confirm their proposed CoIs (including researcher CoIs) meet the EPSRC investigator eligibility and funding policies:

https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/jor/

If I add a "researcher co-investigator' to my proposal, can I charge 0.5 FTE of their time to the project? Or is this not allowed as we are only allowed 0.1 FTE as the total investigator time?
The costings will need to be done in line with the EPSRC & UKRI policies:

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/jor/

The PI & CoI costings allowed in this call for proposals is up to 0.1 FTE in total. The Researcher Co-Investigator can be charged as a directly incurred cost to the proposal if they employed on the project for a significant proportion of their time (normally in excess of 50% of contracted hours). Please contact your Research Costings/Budget team at your university as regarding the costings for the Researcher Co-Investigator.

We work at one of the UK's Catapult Centres and have been approached by some researchers at one of the PETRAS Academic Partner Universities, who are hoping that we can be a collaborative partner as part of the PETRAS ISPEF call. We are aware that user partners cannot receive funding directly from PETRAS, but we would like to know whether the funding would permit this partner university to subcontract us as part of

the collaboration? From our perspective, we cannot guarantee them the support they will need from us without some funding specifically allocated to do so.

All applicants should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an EPSRC grant. Please see the following reference material for EPSRC funding guide and UKRI T&Cs for Research Council fEC Grants:

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/ and https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.

We recommend that you contact your partner university's research grants office for further advice on this matter. They will be able to assist you with specific budgetary advice in line with the EPSRC rules.

However, it must be noted that, if your institution gets funded by the project, it cannot be listed as a user partner of that project - User Partners are (see the rest of the FAQ document for detailed definition of User Partners):

- Recipients/beneficiaries of PETRAS research partner deliverables, and may contribute cash or in-kind value to promote and inform our research;
- Not eligible to receive any EPSRC-provided funding from PETRAS (although they may receive benefits such as knowledge and secondees).

Does the call require PDRAs to have obtained a PhD? I am into the 4ᵗʰ year of my PhD, but I will not complete it before the beginning of the project.

Under normal circumstances, it is expected that the PDRAs (Post-Doctoral Research Associates) to be named/employed through these project/activity proposals already hold their PhDs or be very close to securing it i.e., waiting for their viva or award of the degree from their university. We suggest that you contact your institution's research grants office for further advice on this to ensure compliance with the EPSRC finance policies and rules.

I would like to know if the ISPEF fund could sponsor a software engineer for 6 months.

All applicants should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost an EPSRC grant. Please see the following reference material for EPSRC funding guide and UKRI T&Cs for Research Council fEC Grants:

https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/ and https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.

This fund permits named researchers on your application so perhaps the researcher you have in mind is a software engineer based at your institution? If this is the case, a cost such as this is allowable in this call as per the guidelines stated above. However, should the software engineer be based at a private industry for example, this would be outside the remit of this call and EPSRC funding guidelines. In any case, we would anticipate that your research support office will be able to advise on this.

The call guidance states that projects should start in January 2022 and must be completed by no later than the end of March 2023. Given the end date, as the maximum project duration is 6 months, is it possible to go for a later start date of 1ˢᵗ April 2022 with the project being completed by 30ᵗʰ September 2022?

Applicants are expected to start their projects in January 2022 (**or thereof, in the earlier parts of 2022**). The proposed project durations will have to be 6 months. The end dates of the projects will depend on their start dates; however, it must be noted that projects cannot have end dates later than March 2023.

If you are proposing to start your project later than the period recommended above, a strong justification will be required. If funded, PETRAS will be expecting the successful projects to adhere to their proposed start and end dates given in their proposals.

The guidance says that you will fund 0.1 FTE PI and Co-I time with 0.1 FTE to be matched by the applying institution. Is this salary match post-specific i.e. each PI and Co-I has to have salary match the same as the amount being claimed through the grant; or is it FTE-specific i.e. the 0.1 match could come from two members of a three person project team with those two members matching in FTE additional to that being claimed through the grant to bring the total FTE to 0.1?

If successful, the applicants' institutions will be expected to provide complimentary 0.1 FTE of investigator time (PI & CoI time) to match the 0.1 FTE PETRAS is providing as part of this call. To address your query, yes, the salary match is expected to be post-holder specific, i.e., each PI and CoI has to have salary match the same as the amount being claimed through the grant.

I would like to ask about equipment cost. The cost of devices for our project proposal is currently higher than £10,000. However, the guidance for equipment is limited in £10,000. Does this mean the cost of all devices is limited to £10,000, or just one piece of equipment cannot over 10,000?

As stated in the call's guidance document, equipment over £10,000 in value (incl. VAT) is not available through this call. Equipment funding specific to the project up to 10% of the value of the grant, or under £10,000 (incl. VAT), whichever is the lesser, is allowable.

In the ISPEF call, is it possible for an academic to be a co-investigator on a bid while requesting 100% funding for their time?

The costings will need to be done in line with the EPSRC & UKRI policies:

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/

https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/jor/

The PI & CoI costings allowed in this call for proposals is up to 0.1 FTE in total. The Researcher Co-Investigator can be charged as a directly incurred cost to the proposal if they are employed on the project for a significant proportion of their time (normally in excess of 50% of contracted hours). If you are after the latter option, please contact your Research Costings/Budget team at your university as regarding the costings for the Researcher Co-Investigator.

I'm working on my application to the ISPEF CfP but we had a question regarding the costing for PI time. We understand that 0.1 FTE can be costed on the proposal while another 0.1 FTE should be provided by the applicant's department. Could you confirm how this impact overheads? Can overheads be fully claimed or only of 50% of the PI time?

We can confirm that PETRAS will fund overheads pertaining to the FTE that is funded for your project, i.e., if you request 0.1 FTE for the PI this FTE will incur indirects, estates and infrastructure technician costs which will be covered by the call. However, the additional 0.1 FTE provided by your university will not incur overheads payable by PETRAS.

We recommend on your budget to just state the FTE you are requesting funding for as this keeps things more streamlined.

I plan to submit a proposal to the ISPEF Call. From the guidance, a 6-month Post-Doctoral Research Associate (PDRA) may be supported. May I ask does this call support part-time Research Assistants? I have some PhD students who are close to completion and are suitable candidates for the research if it is funded. In addition, I have one PETRAS funded project running, I hope I am still eligible to submit an application.

Having another PETRAS funded project running in parallel to this proposal does not affect your eligibility to submit applications to this call. As stated in the call document, you must however ensure the following: "If the applicants have got currently ongoing PETRAS funded

projects and would like to name existing PDRAs for their submission to this call, they will need to show how they plan to deliver both projects on schedule and within budget, should their ISPEF application be successful."

Regarding the second part of your question: Under normal circumstances, it is expected that the PDRAs (Post-Doctoral Research Associates) to be named/employed through these project proposals already hold their PhDs or be very close to securing it i.e., waiting for their viva or award of the degree from their university. We suggest that you contact your institution's research grants office for further advice on this to ensure compliance with the EPSRC finance policies and rules.

Please could you clarify the expected start date for this one. The guidance states that "applicants are expected to start their projects in January 2022 and complete their work by no later than end of March 2023", but the maximum duration is 6 months. Does that mean that successful proposals just need to start by October 2022 and not necessarily in January 2022?

Applicants are expected to start their projects in January 2022 (**or thereof, in the earlier parts of 2022**). The proposed project durations will have to be 6 months. The end dates of the projects will depend on their start dates; however, it must be noted that projects cannot have end dates later than March 2023.

If you are proposing to start your project later than the period recommended above, a strong justification will be required.

If funded, PETRAS will be expecting the successful projects to adhere to their proposed start and end dates given in their proposals.

I am thinking to apply for the PETRAS ISPEF with a proposal, to verify the research outcomes from a current project. Can you please comment on the start/end dates of potential projects to be submitted to this call?

The applicants are expected to start their projects in January 2022 (**or thereof, in the earlier parts of 2022**). The proposed project durations will have to be 6 months. The end dates of the projects will depend on their start dates; however, it must be noted that projects cannot have end dates later than March 2023.

If you are proposing to start your project later than the period recommended above, a strong justification will be required.

If funded, PETRAS will be expecting the successful projects to adhere to their proposed start and end dates given in their proposals.

I have got a question about projects' start and end dates: If the project is 6 months maximum, and must start Jan 2022, how would it be possible to have an end date anywhere close to March 2023? The latest it could possibly end would be June 2022? The statement that all projects must end by March 2023 is where my confusion lies.

All applicants are expected to start their projects in January 2022 (**or thereof, in the earlier parts of 2022**). The proposed project durations will have to be 6 months. The end dates of the projects will depend on their start dates; however, it must be noted that projects cannot have end dates later than March 2023. Late 2022 start dates are much later than PETRAS would like to see the projects funded through this call to initiate their activities. It's in those instances, where March 2023 end date may apply. However, the applicants of such proposals will be expected to provide strong and compelling justification to state the rationale behind their late start requests.

If funded, PETRAS will be expecting the successful projects to adhere to their proposed start and end dates given in their proposals.

Format of submissions

For a proposal that involves more than one academic partner institution, how should the applicants complete the application template?

The lead applicant must complete the online form on behalf of their consortium (electronically via the submit.com submission system). Please refer to section on "How to Apply" in the ISPEF Call for Proposals guidance document for further details.

A web link to download a PDF of the application form questions (not editable) can be found on the ISPEF call for proposals guidance document which can be shared with the consortium members to coordinate their inputs. The lead applicant will be responsible to complete and submit the joint application through the online system by the call's deadline.

Is there a template for the application form and what is the maximum length?

The call guidance document provides a web link to download a PDF copy of the application form (not editable), which shows the info/sections needed with relevant word/page limits (see **further information section** of the ISPEF call guidance document).

The PETRAS proposals system doesn't support multiple logins working on a proposal. Since PIs are notoriously busy, it makes sense if someone else actually does the work of entering the proposal (with a different email address from the PI). Please would you confirm that this is acceptable?

It is acceptable for other colleagues to create login details and undertake administrative tasks of preparing/submitting a proposal on proposed PIs' behalf. However, the PIs will have the ultimate responsibility and sign-off of their proposal submission before/by the call's deadline.

It seems there are only 2 spaces for co-investigators, is this the maximum number allowed? How can we add additional CoI details in the form?

The application form has been designed to provide spaces to enter details of up to two CoIs. However, if the applicants wish to add more CoIs to their proposal, they can do so by utilising the 2nd CoI data fields in the online application form to enter details of any additional CoIs, and send an email to petras-proposals@ucl.ac.uk to inform the PETRAS Centre team about this. The Centre Team will check and confirm the additional CoI entries with the applicants to ensure they are captured and processed accordingly.

Is standard UKRI Arial font 11 eligible for CFS? (Because it says "at least Sans Serif font")

Yes, Arial is a sans-serif typeface/font, and can be used as part of your application to prepare the Case for Support document.

Is it possible to include a support letter from a department/centre/group etc. (which is different than the main applicant's department) even if they are an internal resource to our university and not a User Partner? If funded, they will participate to our project with in-kind/cash contributions. It seems the submit interface does not allow for this or at least I could not find a way to upload it.

Yes, this will be possible to do. You can add this information under one of your user partner related questions (Q51-62) and clearly state that they are not user partners but part of your university's internal resources. Once this is done and your application is submitted, please do email us at petras-proposals@ucl.ac.uk to confirm it. We will then make sure this information is processed correctly.

We are preparing our submission for the ISPEF Call. I have a query regarding the requested attachment of a "budget breakdown from your organisation's financial system" (Question 45). Could you please clarify what this should include?

The information uploaded should be the same information as if you were applying for an UKRI grant using Je-S.

Do we have to include references in the Case for Support 4-page document, or can we put those references in the bibliography section of the form (i.e., do we have a full 4 pages of text in the Case for Support document)?

The case for support document can only be 4 pages as detailed in the call application form. Question 65 (references) is intended to capture the references the applicants may want to provide as part of their application (i.e., provide a bibliography for the references cited in the proposal if relevant). Hence, the applicants may cite sources in their proposals, and provide the associated list of references to sources cited in the text under Q65 – references.

We are preparing our submission for the ISPEF Call. I have a query regarding the requested attachment of a "budget breakdown from your organisation's financial system" (Question 45). Could you please clarify what this should include?

The information uploaded should be the same information as if you were applying for an UKRI grant using Je-S.

Could you please advise what is expected in the budget breakdown attachment?

The information uploaded should the same information as if you were applying for an UKRI grant using Je-S. Using an extract of the Standard Financial Report along with a reference to the Standard Financial Report generated. This will allow an audit trail if required by EPSRC.

One of our researchers is submitting a proposal to this call. We note on the application form that you need the budget to be detailed on the application form and the match to be included on the Letter of Support. There is also a requirement to upload each partners budgets from the organisations financial systems. As we are supplying the figures in the table and letter, is this to include the match funding (some of the detail contained from the system/s may be confidential). I note the letter of support is only required from the User Partners. I'm assuming though that the costing needs to include the match element?

The budget uploads requested are for the academic partner(s) requesting PETRAS funding and not for your user partners. You do not need to show the user partner contributions in the budget uploads question (Q45) and the finance tables provided in Q42-44. The user partner match funding contribution related details are to be provided under Q51-62. The letters of support are only required for the proposed user partners.

Partners – I was hoping to link up with another PETRAS Academic partner university for my proposal. Could I add an academic from that institution as a CoI in my application? Will I need a letter of support from that partner organisation and to work with a partner on the project too?

The proposed projects can include multiple partners (both academic and user partners). Please refer to the call guidance document and the rest of the FAQ document for further details. You can choose to add an academic from another PETRAS Academic partner university as a CoI if that is what's intended for the work to be proposed. If the proposed CoI(s) organisation is already a PETRAS academic partner, then providing Letters of Support (LoSs) for that partner is not mandatory for this call. However, if you wish, you may choose to provide LoSs in such instances, to show their support to your project. It must be noted that the applicants will also need to propose a user partner(s) for their project, as this is one of the key requirements of this call for proposals. The Letters of Support (LoSs) from the User Partners are mandatory for this call.

When describing project's financial details (questions 42-44), it is necessary to specify DI and DA costs. What is the meaning of DI and DA?

The financial details should be shown as if submitting via EPSRC which requires the split between the different budget heading and split between DI (Directly Incurred) and DA (Directly Allocated). Further guidance can be found at:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/

When describing staff (question 36), it is necessary to provide PETRAS background for each staff. How can we determine our PETRAS background? We are academics from a PETRAS Academic Partner University, but have not been involved with the Centre activities in the past.

This will only apply if you are already involved in another PETRAS project. If you are not, then please put N/A in that field. Please also note that this part should include PDRA details to be named in the proposal as well.

The application form requires the applicants to list "two relevant high-quality publications". Are we correct in the assumption that the 2 publications listed should be from the PI?

The two publications required will need to be authored by the proposed PI and/or the other project team members (CoIs etc.) named in your proposal.

I will be submitting a proposal to the ISPEF call. While going through the form, I saw an item: "Please list two relevant high-quality publications" and I have a question on this. Do I have to mention 2 publications wherein PI/CoIs are one of the authors or I can mention 2 publications which are relevant to the proposed techniques, but may not involve any of the PI/CoIs?

The two publications required will need to be authored by the proposed PI and/or the other project team members (CoIs etc.) named in your proposal.

Suitability

The call guidance focuses on knowledge into practice that is centred around user partners from industry and/or the public sector. How competitive would an application be that seeks to work with a user partner from these sectors in order to engage the public with the research, or is the focus very much on impact for industry and public sector partners alone?

Unfortunately, we are unable to comment on the competitiveness of the draft applications/ideas at this stage of the call. The applications received within the submission period will be in competition with each other for funding and will be scored against the eligibility and project requirements as well as their alignment to the assessment criteria listed in the ISPEF call guidance document.

Through this call, PETRAS is seeking to fund impactful projects, developed in collaboration with user partners (new or existing), which translate their research findings into practical applications/outcomes that can be showcased as impactful evidence of PETRAS research, transforming knowledge into practice (some examples have been given in the call document as a refence). Proposals must aim to evidence/validate their value and impact in a demonstrable and/or real- world environment. To achieve this, the proposed projects will need to be co-created and aligned with the needs of its user partner(s). This is important in ensuring that they can deliver concepts that are of mutual value to both parties as well as for PETRAS and other key stakeholders such as, EPSRC and UKRI. Please refer to the ISPEF call's FAQ document for further details on the user partner aspects. However, the proposed projects' impact do not need to be limited to its user partners, and indeed it is expected to be wider (such as engagement with public for further impact).

Miscellaneous

Are there lists of previously funded projects from PETRAS Centre and the Hub?

Details can be found on our website:

- PETRAS Centre projects: https://petras-iot.org/projects/?_sft_status=current

- PETRAS Hub projects: https://petras-iot.org/projects/?_sft_status=complete.

Do we have to fill in timesheets?
There is no requirement to complete timesheets.

What happens with IP resulting from any research project funded by PETRAS?
With respect to IP which might result from any research project funded by PETRAS, the Centre follows EPSRC policies. Please follow the link below, which sets out these policies in detail:
https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/how-to-apply/funding-basics/intellectual-property-commercialisation/