The UKRI Coronavirus Hub gives you the latest information on the vital work of UKRI and our community in response to the crisis, what grants and awards we have made, and our continuing call to fund your ideas to limit the outbreak and protect life.

For more information please go here
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STFC Calls

Knowledge Exchange Funding

STFC offers a diverse portfolio of knowledge exchange schemes, designed to allow funding of projects from initial development right through to commercialisation. These schemes are designed to facilitate the transfer of STFC funded research into an industrial setting over a number of different stages of commercialisation.

Innovation Partnership Scheme (IPS)
- To transfer technology and expertise developed through STFC funding to the marketplace in partnership with industry and other academic disciplines.

Follow-on Funding (FoF)
- To support proof of concept for a project following on from STFC funded research. Partner not permitted.

IPS Fellowships
- To develop an institution’s capacity for knowledge exchange and commercialisation from STFC-funded research.

The next funding call for all of these schemes will open on the 3rd of June with a closing date of 3rd September 2020.

For more information, please go here

CLASP 2021; Healthcare and Energy

The key challenge areas for Challenge Led Applied Systems Programme (CLASP) 2021 call have been identified as Healthcare and Energy. Call guidance and potential themes to follow.

The Expression of Interest stage of this call will open on the 10th of November with a closing date of 14th January 2021.

For more information on the CLASP scheme go here
Future flight challenge phase 2: strand 1, fast track development

UK registered businesses can apply for a share of up to £30 million to develop integrated aviation systems and vehicle technologies that enable new classes of electric or autonomous air vehicles. This funding is from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

**Competition opens:** Monday 11 May 2020  
**Competition closes:** Wednesday 1 July 2020 12:00pm

**Description**
Innovate UK will invest up to £30 million in innovation projects as part of phase 2 of the Future Flight Challenge. We will fund projects that develop integrated aviation systems and/or vehicle technologies that enable new classes of electric or autonomous air vehicles. Solutions should be able to be integrated into a mature operational environment, ensuring safe and reliable operation in flight and on the ground.

This is phase 2 of a 3-phase programme. In this phase, we are funding projects up to 18 months duration. We particularly welcome projects of shorter duration who can deliver rapid impact.

This competition phase has 2 strands. This is strand 1.

Strand 1, the ‘fast track’ strand encourages applications from smaller businesses and organisations who may not work within the aerospace or aviation sector.

Strand 2 will focus on larger projects and encourage applications that seek to integrate technologies and systems.

We plan to open phase 3 of this programme in winter 2021 when we will invite projects, including those who are not part of phase 2, to demonstrate an integrated ‘system of systems’ approach to the operation of new air vehicles in non-segregated airspace.

For this competition, phase 2, strand 1, your proposal should describe routes into phase 3 and how you would work with other consortia.

**Project size**
Your project’s total eligible costs must be between £150,000 and £500,000.

For more information please go [here](http://www.istockphoto.com).
Innovate UK Smart Grants: May 2020

Opportunity to apply for a share of up to £25 million to deliver ambitious or disruptive R&D innovations that can make a significant impact on the UK economy.

**Competition opens:** Thursday 28 May 2020  
**Competition closes:** Wednesday 26 August 2020 12:00pm

Smart is Innovate UK’s ‘Open grant funding’ programme.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is investing up to £25 million in the best game-changing and commercially viable innovative or disruptive ideas. All proposals must be business focused.

Applications can come from any area of technology and be applied to any part of the economy, such as, but not exclusively:

- the arts, design and media  
- creative industries  
- science or engineering

Whilst we welcome projects that overlap with the grand challenge areas this is not a requirement, as we are also keen to support projects in other areas.

We may consider total eligible project costs over £2 million (but not exceeding £3 million), subject to the process set out under ‘Eligibility’.

We may share application details with other public sector co-funders if appropriate.

In this competition all projects awarded funding must upload evidence for each expenditure with every claim made. These might include invoices, timesheets, receipts or spreadsheets for capital usage. This is part of Innovate UK’s obligations under the Managing Public Money government handbook in relation to assurance, financial management and control.

**Project size**

Duration between 6 and 18 months and total eligible project costs between £25,000 and £500,000: can be single or collaborative. Duration between 19 and 36 months and total eligible project costs between £25,000 and £2 million: must be collaborative.

For more information please go [here](#)
UK’s Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre Fast Tracked at Harwell

Construction work has begun ahead of schedule to build the highly specialist facility that will house the UK’s Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC). VMIC, a not for profit organisation, will provide the first bespoke strategic vaccine development and manufacturing capability for the UK.

A rapidly accelerated programme, due to Covid-19, will aim to see the 7,000 m² (footprint) state-of-the-art facility opening its doors in 2021, ahead of the original scheduled date in 2022. An unprecedented collaborative effort between The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre, Harwell Campus, Vale of the White Horse District Council, UK Research and Innovation (including STFC), and Glencar, the main contractor, has accelerated the construction of this complex build in order to bring the facility on line early so that it can provide an emergency response capability for the UK.

Dr Matthew Duchars, Chief Executive of the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre said: “Whilst no-one could have predicted the Covid-19 outbreak we are doing all we can to fast track the build so VMIC is set-up to offer long-term support to the UK’s future vaccines needs whilst simultaneously contributing right now to the vital work that will help us emerge from this pandemic.”

Ground works began on the site at Harwell Campus in early April and it is expected that the base-build will be ready for early access for fit-out, in late July/early August.

Talking about the broader importance of VMIC to the Harwell Life Sciences community, Dr Adrian Hill, STFC Lead for the Harwell HealthTec Cluster said: “The accelerated development is not only timely for the UK in respect to Covid19, but it aligns well with our plans to fast-track the development of the campus as a leading hub for the research and manufacture of advanced medicines and therapies.”

The Centre’s main funding comes through a £65 million grant from UK Research and Innovation, as part of the UK Government’s Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.
Promising, early career researchers awarded fellowships

Ten talented researchers, who are in the early stages of their career and have clear leadership potential, have been awarded five-year fellowships to help them realise their research ambitions.

This year’s round of the Science and Technology Facilities Council’s (STFCs) Ernest Rutherford Fellowships, will enable early career researchers, who do not hold an academic position, to establish a strong, independent research programme.

Fellows will conduct research in a number of areas of science including Astrophysics, Nuclear Physics, Theoretical Particle Physics and Cosmology. For example, one of the projects in Experimental High-Energy Physics will push the boundaries of existing research on earth, using the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. Another project in Planetary Astrophysics will use information gathered from space to examine exoplanets.

The scheme provides funding for research programmes and encourages talented researchers, in UK universities, to remain in the country and at the same time attracts outstanding overseas researchers to the UK.

Professor Mark Thomson, Particle physicist and Executive Chair of STFC, said: "Through these prestigious fellowships, STFC supports the very best researchers at a relatively early stage in their careers, enabling them build on their already excellent research. The aim is to attract the most talented and innovative scientists from the UK and abroad. These awards also enable the fellows to advance their careers by further developing their independence and leadership. The Ernest Rutherford Fellows play an important role in advancing the STFC science programme at the highest levels."

All fellows who have completed their fellowship since 2009 are employed and more than 90% hold permanent jobs immediately following the completion of their fellowship. [STFC awards the fellowships once a year, find out more here.]

Also announced today are [UKRI’s Future Leaders Fellows. The fellowships aim to support the creation of a new generation of research leaders who will have links across different sectors and disciplines.]
SPICE receives ‘First Light’

RAL Space’s SPICE instrument has successfully taken its first measurements of the Sun on board the European Space Agency’s (ESA) Solar Orbiter.

RAL Space’s SPICE instrument has successfully taken its first measurements of the Sun on board the European Space Agency’s (ESA) Solar Orbiter.

The SPICE team has been monitoring and testing the instrument since 24 February. Now, after high voltage was supplied to the detectors, external doors have been opened and sunlight has flooded the SPICE telescope mirror for the first time. SPICE is now ready to measure its first extreme-ultraviolet spectra of the Sun.

This is a major milestone for the instrument and for the spacecraft which was launched on 10 February 2020 and is currently on its way to study the Sun up close.

After this latest check of the instrument’s capabilities Dr Andrzej Fludra, RAL Space scientist and SPICE instrument consortium lead said: “This is a scientist’s dream. SPICE works as expected — a great success for the entire international team led by RAL Space.”

Find out more on the RAL Space website
External Innovations and Innovations Club contacts

The External Innovations team manages the activities that aim to realise the impacts and benefits that flow from STFC's investments in science and technology towards commercialisation through one to one brokering, events and a range of funding schemes.

If you wish to contact the teams for more information please see the following contacts and email addresses.

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The Innovations Club newsletter contains a selection of articles drawn from our partner organisations that we think you will find interesting. We welcome your comments  
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