

## STFC Public Engagement Reaction Awards

The STFC Public Engagement Reaction Awards scheme is open.

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#### We Want To

- Provide quick-response public engagement funding for timely projects focused on:
  - Unexpected and/or highly significant discoveries related to STFC's science and technology remit
  - Significantly heightened awareness of the social, cultural, or economic impacts of STFC science and technology
- Highlight the achievements of STFC science and technology, demonstrating the excitement of research and the value of STEM to the UK

#### Our Expectations of Our Reaction Award Holders

- Deliver high-quality public engagement activities during the lifetime of the award
- Champion STFC science and technology, including the impact of science and technology on society
- Interact with STFC's public engagement and communication teams, including participation in STFC networks and events, as required

## 1.0 STFC Public Engagement Reaction Award – Overview

- 1.1 Scheme Remit – What is a Reaction Award?

Reaction Awards are a mechanism to allow the funding of public engagement programmes that are a fast response to new and/or unexpected significant developments related to STFC's science and technology remit.

Most commonly, Reaction Awards will focus around new discoveries in STFC's research fields that generate significant public interest. A Reaction Award may also be appropriate when the awareness of the social, cultural, or economic impacts of STFC science and technology are significantly heightened due to an unanticipated external factor. The Reaction Award peer review system is explicitly asked to make a judgement on Reaction Award applications based upon the novelty and timeliness of the proposed project.

Irrespective of focus, Reaction Award applications will propose high quality and extremely timely programmes of public engagement that inspire and involve target audiences with stories of STFC science and technology.

If in doubt, an applicant is strongly advised to contact the [Public Engagement Team](#) to discuss their Reaction Award application.

#### 1.1.1 Engagement Programmes

Proposed engagement programmes must clearly focus around the remit of the STFC science programme (astronomy, solar and planetary science, particle physics, particle astrophysics, cosmology, nuclear physics and accelerator science) or clearly and demonstrably align to the science and technology work of STFC's national and international laboratories and facilities.

Reaction Awards will not be awarded unless there is a strong and demonstrable link between the proposed activities and STFC science and technology.

#### 1.1.2 General Points

Applicants should use their proposal to clearly explain how their Reaction Award will further the aims of the [STFC Public Engagement Strategy](#).

Applications that highlight the social, ethical, and economic benefits of research are welcomed.

Applicants are encouraged to propose novel or innovative approaches towards engagement as part of their Reaction Award, as long as these are demonstrably well-planned.

STFC focuses heavily on evaluation and applicants must provide a clear evaluation plan showing details of how the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Reaction Award will be captured and evaluated. As outlined in section 1.6.2, we require applicants to report on the outcomes of their Reaction Award in line with the [STFC Public Engagement Evaluation Framework](#), which describes our approach towards effective engagement. We suggest that applicants should familiarise themselves with the STFC Public Engagement Evaluation Framework and consider how the Framework could be used to evaluate their engagement programme.

We encourage applications that propose engagement with audiences considered to have low 'science capital'. Applicants may choose which audiences to engage with, and the methods of engagement. These must be outlined in the proposal.

#### 1.1.3 What the Scheme Will Not Fund:

The following costs are ineligible for support via Reaction Awards:

- Projects where the target audiences are not primarily UK residents
- Fees or honoraria to people already in paid employment to visit or give talks at schools, societies etc. where such activities would reasonably be undertaken as part of their normal duties
- Infrastructure funding or costs for building construction and maintenance
- Projects where it is clear that the whole project would go ahead irrespective of STFC support
- Retrospective funding
- Contingency funds

For applicants from or for schools, note the following ineligible costs:

- Programmes of formal education
- School trips to CERN and trips to other laboratories, observatories & science venues unless they are intrinsic to a wider public engagement project

#### 1.1.4 Reaction Awards for New Digital Content

We will only consider funding digital content (e.g. websites, videos etc.) as an intrinsic part of a wider engagement programme. Any application for digital content needs to include:

- A demonstration of the 'evidence of need' for any proposed content, and/or gaps in current provision of such material
- Evidence that the target audience for any content will be involved in the design and production of such content
- A plan (and budget) for keeping the content sustainable in the future
- Information on licensing in order to promote sharing and re-use of the digital content
- Acknowledgement of web accessibility rules and regulations

## 1.2 Host Organisation

Organisations that apply must be based in the UK.

STFC can only fund organisations that have audited accounts. If this does not describe your organisation, you must work in partnership with an organisation that can receive the funding on your behalf.

## 1.3 Applicant Eligibility

Almost anyone can apply for a Reaction Award, including grant funded researchers, STFC scientists and engineers, facility users, schools, museums, science communicators, universities, colleges etc.

The Principal Applicant must be eligible to apply on behalf of the organisation that would hold the award.

Every application must include a researcher in an STFC-funded area of science or technology. While these researchers often play an active role in delivering the engagement activities, this is not mandatory – they may act as an advisor on the scientific content.

If applicants have any questions about applicant eligibility, please contact the [Public Engagement Team](#) and we will advise on how you may proceed.

#### 1.4 Scheme Value & Costings

The maximum funding available for a Reaction Award is £5,000. Reaction Awards do **not** come under the Full Economic Cost (fEC) framework, and thus £5,000 is absolute limit. Any award we make will be the maximum amount payable, and will include any VAT payable.

For details of other STFC Public Engagement funding schemes please visit the [Public Engagement Grants home page](#).

##### 1.4.1 Equipment Costs

The Reaction Award scheme has no capital budget, thus applicants cannot request funds under the Equipment heading: items of equipment dedicated to the project and costing less than £5,000 should be requested under the 'Other Costs' heading. Please note that any bid for expensive hardware or equipment will not be funded unless they can be shown to be intrinsic to the project.

##### 1.4.2 Use of Funds

Other than restrictions around equipment and those described in 1.1.3, there are no set restrictions on the type of costs that may be applied for. For example, contributions to salaries (where a named individual will undertake work that would not be considered part of their normal duties), cost of materials, and travel & subsistence are eligible.

#### 1.5 Duration and Award Start Dates

Applications can vary in duration but would normally be expected to be for up to 12 months in duration. The earliest start date for an application is approximately one month after submission.

##### 1.5.1 Reaction Award Process Timetable

| Call Activity                               | Indicative Timetable                          |
|---|---|
| Application submitted to STFC               | Open Call – No deadline                       |
| Independent reviewer comments requested     | 5 working days or less from receipt           |
| PI responses to reviewer comments           | 5 working days                                |
| Applicant informed of STFC funding decision | 10 working days after receipt of PI responses |
| Awards Announcements                        | 10 working days or less                       |
| Reaction Awards start                       | No restrictions on start dates                |

Reaction awards will be processed as quickly as possible, but successful applicants should plan to receive notification of funding approximately one month after the application submission (depending on their Je-S registration status, see section 2.1). Award start dates should take this timeline into account.

#### 1.6 Scheme Conditions & Features

STFC Public Engagement Reaction Awards are governed by the grant conditions as set out in the [Research Grants Handbook](#), unless otherwise stated. Applications are accepted and awards are made on the understanding that research organisations and Reaction Award holders agree to observe the terms and conditions and the scheme requirements set out in this document and any amendments issued.

#### 1.6.1 Movement between Organisations

Applicants must take up the award at the host organisation identified in the application. STFC will not allow a Public Engagement Reaction Award holder to change their host organisation prior to taking up an award. Consideration will be given to requests during the course of an award to relocate the grant to a different organisation for scientific or domestic reasons. The agreement of the organisations concerned will be required before seeking approval from STFC.

#### 1.6.2 Reporting & Liaison with STFC

Public Engagement Reaction Award holders are expected to regularly update the record of their grant using the Research Council reporting tool, ResearchFish, in line with the [STFC Public Engagement Evaluation Framework](#). There are additional questions for STFC public engagement grant holders. This enables STFC to easily extract data regarding the impact of the work of our Reaction Award Holders whenever required, and serves as a database of impacts (outputs, outcomes and reach) for an award holder's own reference. To assist with their ResearchFish return, Public Engagement Reaction Award holders are also required, throughout their award, to collect data relevant to their activities in the [STFC Public Engagement metrics spreadsheet](#), and send it to the [Public Engagement Team](#) once a year. [Guidance](#) on how to fill in the Public Engagement questions on ResearchFish, and the metric spreadsheet, are available on the STFC website.

#### 1.6.3 Publication, Resources & Acknowledgement of Support

Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from STFC, quoting the grant reference number if appropriate.

Resources produced as a result of any grants should acknowledge STFC as the funding source using the standard format agreed by funders and publishers and detailed in the additional information accompanying this grant.

In order to ensure appropriate coordination and opportunities to increase the impact of engagement, external media activity produced as a result of this award must be signed off by the STFC Media team before the activity takes place, or is published. This includes press releases, online videos and media briefings. Award holders are responsible for giving STFC sufficient notice in advance of activities such that STFC can advise on content, and/or build the activities of grant holders into our own communications and engagement programmes.

It is the responsibility of the research organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the intellectual assets obtained in the course of the research, whether protected by intellectual property rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the economy. Outcomes and resources should be disseminated and/or made available to both research

and more widespread audiences - for example to inform potential users and beneficiaries of the research.

Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of all intellectual assets, including intellectual property, and responsibility for their application, rests with the organisation that generates them.

STFC may, in individual cases, reserve the right to retain ownership of intellectual assets, including intellectual property (or assign it to a third party under an exploitation agreement) and to arrange for it to be exploited for the national benefit and that of the research organisation involved. This right, if exercised, will be clearly set out in an additional grant condition.

There should be suitable recognition and reward to researchers who undertake activities that deliver benefit through the application of research outcomes. The research organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept these arrangements.

#### 1.6.4 Liability

It is a condition of every grant that STFC accepts no liability for the manner in which the work in connection with the grant is undertaken, and the research organisation and Reaction Award holder will be responsible in all respects for the work and the consequences of it.

#### 1.6.5 Termination of Awards

A grant may be terminated, or its conditions varied, at any time at the absolute discretion of STFC. Should the Reaction Award holder leave their organisation for another research organisation or an alternative type of employment, they must notify the [Public Engagement Team](#) immediately. If it is not possible to transfer the grant then STFC will terminate payments from the day immediately after the Reaction Award holder leaves the host organisation. Failure to submit reports will result in termination of the award unless there are mitigating reasons.

## 2.0 How to Apply

### 2.1 Submitting an Application *via* Je-S

Applications for Public Engagement Reaction Awards are submitted *via* the Research Councils' Joint [Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#). If your organisation is not currently Je-S registered you can self-register *via* the Je-S system to allow your organisation to apply. You must simultaneously begin the full registration process as this may take up to four weeks.

For specific guidance on filling in the Je-S form, please review the advice on the [Je-S Handbook](#).

Applicants from HEIs are advised to contact their host organisation's Research Administration as soon as possible; they will be able to give advice about costing your proposal and internal procedures relating to submitting an application through Je-S. Your Public Engagement Reaction Award application must be costed and submitted by the host organisation.

Emailed or hard copy applications will not be accepted and the page limits outlined below will be strictly enforced by STFC. If any of the supporting documents exceed the specified limits, only the

pages within the limits will be considered. The documents must be submitted as .pdf attachments and should conform to the font and margin guidelines in the [Je-S Helptext](#).

## 2.2 Process Overview

Public Engagement Reaction Award applications are submitted via Je-S.

Reaction Awards are assessed by a two-stage process:

- **Stage One: Proposal submission.** Applicants submit proposal documentation that is assessed via written peer review commentary.
- **Stage Two: Funding Decisions.** Final funding decisions are taken on by STFC on the basis of peer review evidence from stage one.

## 2.3 Documents Required

Together with the relevant Je-S application form, you will need to provide the following attachments:

- **Case for Support** – maximum of three sides of A4 and must include the following:
  - A short overview of the proposed Reaction Award, showing how activities will contribute to meeting the stated aims of the [STFC Public Engagement Strategy](#).
  - The rationale for the Reaction Award, including a description of the timeliness and novelty of the project.
  - A description of the key personnel involved in the project with details of who is responsible for delivering the different aspects of the Reaction Award.
  - A high level justification of resources that allows an informed judgement to be made on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the proposed programme.
  - Details of the target audiences and how they will be reached through the proposed activities.
  - An outline of the evaluation approach.
- **Letters of support** from any project partners (see section 2.4).

## 2.4 Project Partners and Letters of Support

STFC public engagement awards are often partnerships between the grant holders (who apply for and receive financial support from STFC) and 'project partners'. Such partnerships are not a requirement of STFC support, but will strengthen a case for funding when they are deemed well-planned and important for delivery of an impactful programme.

Before an application is made, STFC requires that applicants create proposals that commit the involvement of all parties required to make the proposed programme a success. If an organisation wishes to receive funds from STFC, it must be a listed applicant on the grant. If an organisation will not receive funds from STFC but will have an integral role in the proposed programme, that organisation is a project partner. We encourage applicants to create these partnerships in advance of submitting an application for funding, and to include details of the partnership in the application. Well-constructed partnerships strengthen proposals by providing complementary skills and knowledge, additional staff time, and additional cash or 'in-kind' support.

As part of the application process, project partners are invited to provide a ‘letter of support’ alongside the main body of the application. This letter is read alongside the proposal’s Case for Support, and is considered as part of the peer review process. A well-written letter of support will confirm the organisation’s commitment to the proposed project by articulating the benefits of the collaboration, its relevance to the partner and the potential impacts of the programme in the eyes of the partner. The letter of support should also identify the period of support, and detail the range of ‘in-kind’ and financial contributions offered by the partner.

Letters of support can be **up to two sides of A4 in length**. The letter must be dated clearly, within one month of the submission of the application. To provide assurance that the project partner has authorised the proposed contribution or commitment, the letter should be signed by a named contact, stating the capacity in which they are providing the sign-off. Letters of support are submitted electronically alongside the grant application, *via* the Je-S system.

Letters of support must show meaningful contribution to the proposed public engagement programme – letters featuring supportive language but offering no contributions to the project are of little-to-no value, and should not be included.

Should an applicant state in their proposal that the involvement of a party or organisation is important to increase the chances of success of their proposed programme, these organisations must be included as either applicants or project partners. Applications received without these collaborations in place by the point of submission will not be supported.

#### 2.4.1 STFC National Laboratories and Employees as Project Partners

STFC employs hundreds of scientific and technical staff, alongside our own team of public engagement professionals based at our laboratories across the UK. Applicants for public engagement funding are welcome to seek to include STFC as project partners on public engagement applications where relevant, subject to the guidance above. **Applicants must contact STFC staff at least two weeks in advance of submitting a Reaction Award application** if they consider STFC involvement to be important in making their proposal a success.

Should applicants wish to discuss the ability of STFC to participate in their proposal; the following individuals are appropriate first points of contact for the major national laboratory sites:

| Rutherford Appleton Laboratory                 | Daresbury Laboratory                        | UK Astronomy Technology Centre                   |
|--|---|--|
| Sophy Palmer<br>Public Engagement Manager      | Phill Day<br>Public Engagement Manager      | Olivia Johnson<br>Public Engagement Manager      |
| ✉: sophy.palmer@stfc.ac.uk<br>☎: 01235 445 950 | ✉: phill.day@stfc.ac.uk<br>☎: 01925 603 231 | ✉: olivia.johnson@stfc.ac.uk<br>☎: 0131 668 8263 |

STFC reserves the right to choose not to participate in proposals at our own discretion. Please note that applications involving STFC as a project partner are treated no differently to other applications in the peer review and funding decision process.

#### 2.5 Assessment Process Overview



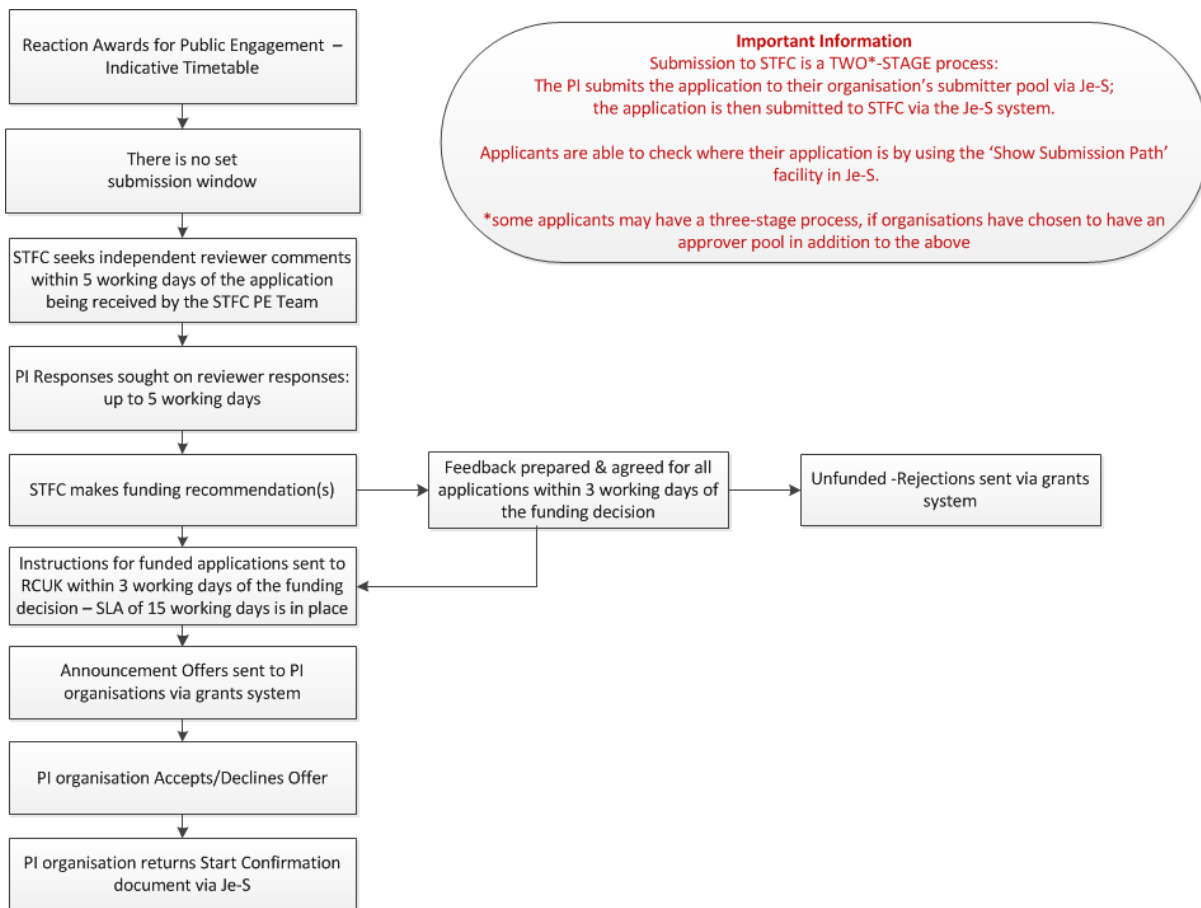
The reviewers use **the assessment criteria** as the basis for funding recommendations:

- Does the application meet the aims of a Reaction Award with respect to the timeliness and novelty of the subject matter?
- Has the applicant clearly described the different engagement activities planned as part of the Reaction Award?
- Has the applicant clearly identified their rationale for the proposed programme, and provided suitable evidence of the need for such work?
- Does the applicant detail key personnel who are going to carry out the proposed programme of work and do they have the necessary expertise to do so effectively?
- Has the applicant provided a high level breakdown of the costs and are they appropriate for the proposed programme of work
- Has the applicant identified the target audience(s) for their activities and how they intend to reach them?
- Has the applicant provided a credible overview of their approach towards evaluating the activities proposed?
- Is the proposal accompanied by a strong Letter of Support from project partners?

Based on the recommendations from the reviewer comments, STFC will then take decisions regarding which applications are funded. The STFC Public Engagement Team will then prepare feedback for all applicants. This feedback will be added to the Je-S system and applicants notified officially of the outcome of their application. We aim to advise all applicants of the outcome of their application within 20 working days.

The decision(s) of STFC are final.

## 2.6 Process Flowchart



### 3.0 Contacts and Enquiries

Before submitting your application you are encouraged to contact the [Public Engagement Team](#) to discuss your ideas and eligibility for the scheme.