The 2019A call for STFC Public Engagement Spark Awards opens for applications on Thursday 14th March and closes on Thursday 2nd May 2019.

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We Want To
- Encourage and support novel, high-quality public engagement activities that highlight STFC's science and technology
- Introduce STFC science and technology to new audiences
- 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 Spark Award Holders
- Delivering high-quality public engagement activities during the lifetime of the award
- Championing STFC science and technology, including the impact of science and technology on society
- Interacting with STFC’s public engagement and communication teams, including participation in STFC networks, events, and advisory structures when requested
1.1 Scheme Remit
STFC Spark Award holders undertake high quality programmes of novel public engagement that inspire and involve target audiences with stories of STFC science and technology.

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.

Spark 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 Case for Support to clearly explain how their Spark Award furthers 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 Spark 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 Spark Award will be captured and evaluated. As outlined in section 1.7.2 we require applicants to report on the outcomes of their Spark 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 Case for Support.

1.1.3 Spark Awards and STFC’s Wonder Initiative
The Wonder initiative is about giving under-served communities an equal voice by listening, understanding, and responding to what people want to know about science and technology. Wonder marks a long-term commitment by STFC public engagement to move our focus towards audience-driven public engagement with under-served communities in the most socioeconomically-deprived areas of the UK. Financial support via Spark Awards will become a key part of the Wonder initiative.

The target audience for Wonder is defined according to Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Specifically, STFC are interested in supporting audience-driven engagement that works with audiences,
particularly those 8-14 years old and their families and carers, from the 40% most socioeconomically-deprived areas of the UK.

STFC define the 40% most socioeconomically-deprived areas of the UK as those areas listed in the bottom two quintiles of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation for the respective part of the UK.

Applicants are explicitly invited to submit Spark Awards that work with the Wonder target audience. Details of how to highlight this in a Case for Support are provided in section 2.2.1, and attendant modifications to our peer review process are outlined in section 2.4.1.

1.1.4 What the Scheme Will/Will Not Fund:
The following costs are ineligible for support via Spark 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
- Costs for hardware or equipment over the individual value of £10,000 (see section 1.4.1)
- 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, including those projects with a start date after the closing date but before the funding decisions are announced
- Awards will not be funded for the sole purpose of authorship and publication of books and novels.
- Contingency funds

For applicants from or for schools, please note the following:
- Request for supply/teacher cover and/or transport costs are eligible for consideration

For applicants from or for schools, please note that requests for the following are ineligible:
- 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

1.1.5 Spark 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 Institution
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 Spark Award, including grant funded researchers, STFC scientists and engineers, facility users, schools, museums, science communicators, and amateur astronomy groups.

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.

1.3.1 Previous Applications
Applicants may apply for a Spark Award for any new idea, or to resubmit a previous application that can demonstrate it has addressed feedback received during the peer review process.

Applicants seeking funding for the continuation or evolution of a programme previously funded by STFC should apply for a Legacy Award.

1.4 Scheme Value & Costings
The maximum funding available for a Spark Award is £15,000. Spark Awards do not come under the Full Economic Cost (fEC) framework, and thus £15,000 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 Spark 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 £10,000 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, 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.
1.4.3 Spark Award Funding as a Contribution to a Larger Project
An applicant may wish to request funding for a Spark Award as an STFC contribution to a larger overall public engagement programme. An applicant must make this clear in their Case for Support.

In these circumstances, applicants must clearly indicate where the additional source(s) of funding for the overall project are being secured from. Whenever possible, applicants should have secured this additional funding before seeking a contribution from STFC. If this is not possible, applicants must provide details of when further funding will be secured.

STFC reserves the right to reject an application that does not have convincing plans for securing all required funding, or to temporarily withhold funding for successful applications until such time that proof of the required additional funding has been secured.

1.5 Spark Award Duration and Start Dates
Applications can vary in duration but would normally be expected to be for up to 36 months in duration. Applications to the 2018B call are not expected to start before 1 February 2019.

1.5.1 Spark Award Process Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Activity</th>
<th>Indicative Timetable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call announced</td>
<td>14 March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call closes</td>
<td>2 May 2019 at 1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application volume to Panel</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel assessment meeting</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards Announcements</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>PE Spark Awards start</td>
<td>From 1 August 2019 onwards</td>
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1.6 Scheme Flexibility
STFC intends this scheme to be flexible and reserves the right to deal, as it thinks fit, with application of unusual character and to waive any rule at its absolute discretion.

1.7 Scheme Conditions & Features
STFC Public Engagement Spark 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 award holders agree to observe the terms and conditions and the scheme requirements set out in this document and any amendments issued.

1.7.1 Movement between Institutions
Applicants must take up the award at the host institution identified in the application. STFC will not allow a Public Engagement Spark Award holder to change their host institution 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 institution for scientific or domestic reasons. The agreement of the institutions concerned will be required before seeking approval from STFC.
1.7.2 Reporting & Liaison with STFC
Public Engagement Spark 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 Spark 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 Spark 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.

1.7.3 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.

1.7.4 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 award holder will be responsible in all respects for the work and the consequences of it.

1.7.5 Termination of Awards
A grant may be terminated, or its conditions varied, at any time at the absolute discretion of STFC. Should the award holder leave their institution 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 award holder leaves the host institution. 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 Spark 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. This will allow your organisation to apply to the call without going through the full registration process. If your application is successful, RCUK will contact you in order to help you with the full registration process.

For specific guidance on filling in the Je-S form, please refer to the Je-S Handbook.

The full Je-S registration process can take up to four weeks so if you do want to fully register please leave yourself plenty of time before the deadline. Please contact the Je-S helpdesk on (01793) 44 4164 or via e-mail to get registered. You will need to give the name and contact details of the organisation together with details of the scheme/call you are applying for.

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 Helpertext.

If you have any doubt about your eligibility please contact the Public Engagement Team prior to starting the process in order to confirm your eligibility for the scheme.

2.2 Documents Required
Together with your completed Je-S application form, you will need to provide the following attachments:

- **Case for Support** – maximum of six sides of A4. The Case for Support must include the following:
  - A short overview of the applicant’s track record in public engagement with science and technology. This track record should focus on areas relevant to the application;
  - The rationale for the Spark Award, showing the overall aims, anticipated outcomes and how activities will contribute to meeting the stated aims of the STFC Public Engagement Strategy;
  - A clear plan for engagement activities the applicant intends to undertake during the Spark Award. Applicants should provide details of their plans to deliver these activities, including how they will effectively engage their target audiences, identification of potential risks and appropriate mitigation strategies;
  - An evaluation plan showing details of how the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the Spark Award will be captured and evaluated;
  - A dissemination plan detailing how resources, learning outcomes, outputs, etc. will be made available to wider audiences;
  - A Justification of Resources – a maximum of two sides of A4. This justifies the requested funds applied for in an application. A Justification of Resources should:
    - allow reviewers to make an informed judgement on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the proposed programme;
    - explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the programme proposed taking into account the nature and complexity of the proposal. It
should not be simply a list of the resources required as this is already given in the Je-S form.

All items requested in the Je-S form must be justified.

Any proposals requesting items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the research organisation’s own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).

Further details of how costs should be justified can be found in the ‘Supporting Information’ section of the STFC Research Grants Handbook.

2.2.1 Highlighting alignment to the Wonder initiative
As outlined in section 1.1.3, STFC are inviting Spark Award applications that propose programmes of engagement that work with the target audience of the Wonder initiative. Applicants who wish to undertake such work should use their Case for Support and project partner letters of support to highlight how their application aligns to Wonder in the following ways:

- The rationale for the Spark Award should clearly indicate how the aims and desired outcomes of the Spark Award have been developed in partnership with audience group(s) selected.
- The rationale should also indicate why the target audience has been selected, and provide a summary of the audience in a way that clearly indicates alignment to target audience outlined in section 1.1.3.
- The plan for engagement activities should show clear evidence of being designed in partnership with the target audiences.
- Letters of Support (see section 2.4) will ideally be obtained from partner organisations that will work with the target audience as part of the Spark Award, detailing how their contribution will help to support a successful programme.

2.3 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 ‘statement of support’ alongside the main body of the application. This statement is read alongside the proposal’s Case for Support, and is considered as part of the peer review process. A well-written statement 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 statement 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. A letter must be dated clearly, within six months of the submission date 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.

2.3.1 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 four weeks in advance of the submission deadline 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rutherford Appleton Laboratory</th>
<th>Daresbury Laboratory</th>
<th>UK Astronomy Technology Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophy Palmer Public Engagement Manager</td>
<td>Phill Day Public Engagement Manager</td>
<td>Olivia Johnson Public Engagement Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:sophy.palmer@stfc.ac.uk">sophy.palmer@stfc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:phil.day@stfc.ac.uk">phil.day@stfc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:olivia.johnson@stfc.ac.uk">olivia.johnson@stfc.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01235 445 950</td>
<td>01925 603 231</td>
<td>0131 668 8263</td>
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</table>

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.

2.4 Assessment Process Overview
Spark Awards are assessed by a one-stage peer review process: all applications are reviewed by an independent panel of peer reviewers. The peer review panel will have a range of expertise in engagement, outreach, education and the communication of science and technology. The panel members have knowledge of STFC facilities and grant-funded research.

The panel uses the following assessment criteria as the basis for its recommendations:

- Has the applicant demonstrated a relevant track record in public engagement?
- Does the application have clear links to STFC science and technology?
- Is the rationale for the proposed award convincing, and does it align to the STFC Public Engagement Strategy?
- Is the application an example of a particularly novel engagement approach?
- Is there a clear and appropriate plan for the proposed engagement activities, tailored to the target audiences, and including a consideration of project risk?
- Is there an effective and suitable plan for evaluation of the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the award?
- Is there a suitable plan for publicising the outcomes of the award, and disseminating any outputs produced to wider audiences?
- Is the proposal an effective use of funding to achieve the declared objectives?

The panel makes recommendations for funding in the form of a rank-ordered list of proposals, based upon the assessment criteria.

Based on the recommendations from the panel, STFC will then take decisions regarding which applications are funded.

Applicants will be advised of the results via the Je-S system. This will usually be around 10 to 12 weeks after the closing date of the call. The decision of STFC is final.

2.4.1 Peer review of applications aligned to the Wonder initiative
All Spark Award applications that propose working with the target audience of the Wonder initiative will be identified by STFC staff upon receipt of the application. These applications are assessed by the panel using the same assessment criteria as for other Spark Awards.

However, the panel will create two rank-ordered lists of proposals – one that lists applications aligned to the Wonder initiative, and one that lists all other received applications. These two rank-ordered lists will be ‘tensioned’ against one another to maintain the relative quality rankings of the proposals.

STFC will then take funding decisions regarding which applications are funded, splitting the available funding between the two rank-ordered lists as appropriate.

2.5 Successful Applications
Awards will be given in the form of a grant from STFC to the principal applicant’s organisation. Standard Conditions of Contract can be obtained on request, and will be supplied along with formal
notification of any award. The offer letter will be sent to the organisation’s Je-S account and it is their responsibility to forward the information to you.

The organisation will need to accept the award through the Je-S system which will in turn generate a starting confirmation document which will need to be returned by the organisation via the Je-S system as soon as you incur expenditure on the project. Once this has been done the grant becomes active and the quarterly payments profile is created.

Your organisation will receive payment at quarterly intervals throughout the duration of the project (March, June, September and December). To trigger the final payment you will have to submit a Final Expenditure Statement (on Je-S), which is due three months after the end date of the project.

The final payment will be a reconciliation between what has been spent and what has been paid to date.

Payment will be by BACS transfer only, hence successful applicants will be asked to submit their bank account details when registering for a Je-S account, which will be treated in the strictest confidence.

2.5.1 Reporting Requirements
Successful applicants will be required to supply information requested via the ResearchFish data collection tool. Awards that have been funded under the Public Engagement Spark Award scheme have a separate, award-specific section within ResearchFish to be completed.

If the final expenditure statement is not received within the three month period allowed, STFC may recover 20% of expenditure incurred on the grant. All payments may be recovered if the final expenditure statement is not received within six months of the end of the grant.

Applicants must agree to provide STFC with access to completed materials generated by their projects within three months of the grant end date and a means by which to make such materials publicly available, wherever possible.
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.