

# Strategic Priorities Fund: Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Food Systems

## FAQs

- Is there any restriction on the number of proposals that an institution can lead or be involved with for this call?
  - There are no restrictions around the number of proposals an institution can be involved in, however we expect institutions to only lead on one application
- Please provide an example of a civil society and government partner.
  - A civil society organisation is defined as a non-state, not for profit voluntary entity formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the State and the market, e.g. charities such as the World Wide Fund for Nature.
  - A Government partner could be a department in Government such as Defra and DHSC or equivalents from the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales & NI
- Do PSREs count as Government, Business or academia?
  - PSREs are technically counted as Government, however in this call they are eligible to apply for funding. We would therefore expect at least one other UK government partner in the consortia (e.g. Gov departments) alongside a PSRE.
- Are there any expectations for match funding of studentships?
  - There are no expectations regarding match funding of studentships
- Is the 'missing middle' (e.g. supply, processing etc.) seen as an important part of this call or is it not within scope?
  - The missing middle is a very important component of the food system and would therefore be expected to be covered within the portfolio of studentships and within the expertise demonstrated by the partnership
- What are the expectations for non-academic partners? What kinds of contribution could they be expected to make?
  - Non-academic partners can contribute in different ways, for example and not limited to: financial commitments to underwrite or co-fund a number of studentships; commitment to cover the costs of access to facilities or training that cannot be otherwise provided by an eligible institution; strategic links to an important stakeholder or user; commitment to provide placements for students.
- Will you expect the CDT to demonstrate integration with other relevant DTPs?
  - The proposal should demonstrate how it plans to integrate doctoral candidates with cohorts from other UKRI doctoral investments through already existing DTPs/ CDT programmes, and provide evidence for mutual benefit to both existing programmes and this CDT.
- Does the mix of natural and social science in an individual studentship have to be 50:50 or can it vary across the studentship portfolio?
  - The mix of natural and social science in individual studentships does not have to be 50:50 and how this is delivered in each project should be tailored to the individual doctoral candidate, the research project and the supervisory team. The balance between the two should be well thought through with natural and social science integrated throughout the project.
- If Defra is part involved in administering this call are they still allowed to partner with Centres?

- Yes, all Government partners involved with the SPF Food Systems Programme are able to act as partners on the CDT
- Can we cost in admin posts and project management support for the Centre?
  - No
- Is it a strict requirement that every project must include natural and social science research? If so, what are the considerations in terms of the employability of PhD graduates who seek employment in discipline-focused academic departments? (i.e. academic departments that expect doctoral training in a single discipline)
  - All projects should integrate the natural and social sciences, however how this is done in practice should be carefully thought through for each project, to maximise the benefits for the projects and the students. Students should complete their PhDs with sufficient expertise in their field to progress in their chosen career path (academic or otherwise) and also to meet the standards to secure a doctoral degree from their institution.
- Must all projects be UK-based or is there the potential for projects/case studies/fieldwork in food production/processing etc to be based abroad? And is it possible to partner with international research organisation?
  - This programme is looking at the UK food system, which includes imports from abroad, therefore there is potential for international components/partnering; however these must link back strongly to the UK food system and improving health and sustainability outcomes.
- Is a Head of Department statement really needed for each Department or can an Institutional letter cover several departments?
  - Where numerous departments within a single organisation are expected to host studentships we can accept a single institutional letter of support, however the individual departments and their proposed involvement should be listed in this letter.
- Training tomorrow's professionals to change the UK Food System may require more than just producing PhDs - is there scope (strategically and/or financially) to fund other kind of training, e.g. MSc, extracurricular within this programme?
  - This call is for doctoral training only
- Is it anticipated that all the PhDs will be fulltime or is there scope for people already working in industry to undertake a part time PhD
  - Part time doctoral studies are permitted and those coming from stakeholder organisations are encouraged
- What is the difference between a full versus associate partner?
  - Full Partners will form the core decision-making unit of the CDT and will be expected to contribute resources and host studentships. Associate Partners will not participate in the core decision-making unit however may still contribute some resource or advice.
- If a specific PhD project was 100% either natural or social sciences but there was an awareness of their contribution within a cross disciplinary group would that be acceptable?
  - No, all projects must have natural and social sciences integrated. We have not specified a proportion but 'bolt-on' approaches must be avoided.
- Are you expecting a 1 year MRes + 3 Year PhD model?
  - No these are four-year PhD studentships.
- How important is it to have representation from England, Wales, Scotland and N Ireland?

- We are not expecting representation from all parts of the UK in single proposals and consideration should be given to proximity of partners to allow for student travel for cohort building activities.
- The website says that '£300K of this budget must be allocated to coordination activities through a Flexible Supplement Fund.' Please could you clarify this?
  - This fund can be used flexibly to support, for example: training and development opportunities; supplementary funds for placements; opportunities to provide training with business or at the interdisciplinary interface; widening participation activities to address identified discrepancies in the take-up of doctoral opportunities between different social groups, particularly those underrepresented in doctoral programmes; cross CDT network building activities, including with related studentship investments; student travel for CDT-related events and training.
- Are the remits of councils such as EPSRC, AHRC and STFC seen as less important as they are not partners on the whole SPF Programme?
  - As a Strategic Priorities Fund Programme the remit of all UKRI research councils is within scope of the call and no council is seen as more important than the others.