

NetDRIVE: Community Project Integration and Knowledge Translation

Third Funding Call – Part B

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Announcement and guidance

1. Preamble

Funders:	NetDRIVE, University of Leeds
Funding source:	Grant UKRI910
Funding Type:	Flexible Fund
Total Fund:	£338,000
Award Range:	£50,000 - £80,000
Process:	Two Stage, Closed call
Closing Date Stage 1:	Wednesday, September 16 th , 10:00am
Contact:	netdrive@eng.ox.ac.uk

Apply for funding to consolidate outputs and achievements from activities funded in the first and second call and translate knowledge into action with real impact on net zero goals.

Closed call for existing NetDRIVE community activity investigators and champions.

The Network for sustainable Digital Research Infrastructure Vision and Expertise ([NetDRIVE](#)) has been set up to provide a forum for managers, software engineers, academics and others to come together to build a common vision for a sustainable future and to incite a transition to sustainable working practices in the Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) communities. More details about the project aims are given in the NetDRIVE open workplan ([Juckes and Sparrow, 2025](#)) and in reports from the net-zero DRI scoping study which preceded NetDRIVE (Juckes et al., [2022](#), [2023](#)). NetDRIVE is part of the UKRI DRI programme and provides advice to UKRI and to managers and users of the UKRI DRI.

NetDRIVE ensures comprehensive coverage by working on [four parallel themes](#) which span technical and behavioural aspects of the transformational challenge that we face. Two themes encompass different elements of the technical challenges: one revolving around machine rooms and hardware (including hardware in small server rooms and connected devices such as laptops) and the other around software and algorithms. Another two themes span behavioural issues: one aligned with organisational challenges and the other with personal motivation. **This opportunity is inviting proposals led by investigators of existing NetDRIVE projects or by NetDRIVE funded champions.**

Projects should address one of the five topics listed ([section 3.4 below](#)).

This section of the call will fund projects to a value of £338,000 at 100% FEC. Institutions will receive 80% of FEC costs under standard UKRI grant conditions.

You must work for an organisation that is based in the UK and is eligible for UKRI funding under FEC.

We expect to fund five projects, each with full economic cost (FEC) in the range £50,000 to £80,000.

Projects must complete by January 30th, 2028.

2. Who can apply

This opportunity is inviting proposals led by investigators of existing NetDRIVE projects or by NetDRIVE funded champions.

3. What we are looking for

NetDRIVE has funded a portfolio of 13 community projects through two previous funding calls. In this third and final funding call we are looking for projects which will bring together the outputs and developing expertise to facilitate the integration of knowledge from multiple sources and the translation into action.

It is not the intention to fund continuation of projects, but rather to fund the transition of sustainable practices into operational activities which are independently funded. For this reason, co-development of projects with stakeholders who are in a position to take outputs into practise will be essential.

This call is for projects that consolidate outputs and achievements from activities funded in the first and second call and translate knowledge into action with real impact on net zero goals.

The call will use a two-stage process starting with an outline proposal (Stage 1), after which successful teams will be invited to work with their designated stakeholders to develop a full proposal (Stage 2).

3.1 Background

Juckes et al. (2023) found that "The journey to net zero computing requires transformational change which can deliver huge benefits as part of the broader transformation to a new generation of digitally enabled research." The NetDRIVE project is funded to enable this transformational change and is working across four themes: buildings, hardware and code, organisations, and people (Juckes and Sparrow, 2025).

The first two NetDRIVE calls, launched in 2025, funded 13 community projects ([Maalouf et al. 2026](#)). This element, Part B, of the third and final call is inviting those already in receipt of NetDRIVE funding to create new projects which will, in the final year of NetDRIVE, optimise the benefits gained from work already funded.

3.2 NetDRIVE Project Aims

1. Deliver immediate and tangible progress to Net Zero DRI through actionable advice to UKRI and the UKRI DRI community.
2. Provide national and international thought leadership on the transition to sustainable DRI.
3. Build trust and confidence in our transition to a sustainable DRI by 2040 or sooner.

3.3 Objectives of Community Project Integration and Translation

- **Translation:** Ensure that the work of NetDRIVE funded community projects is efficiently translated into impact. Projects should work closely with stakeholders to ensure that outputs are clearly being translated into action during the project time frame.
- **Completeness:** Review work within the topic area, identify gaps and opportunities and either address these or recommend future activities if necessary.
- **Continuity:** Are there elements of the work that require continuing focussed activity, and which cannot be translated into tangible outputs? How should these be continued?
- **Alignment with roadmap:** provide clarity about how the UKRI DRI is progressing and can continue to progress in order to achieve a timely and durable net zero through an inclusive and equitable transition. This includes the need for clear measures to avoid rebound effects of enhanced demand and achieve a real and effective net zero.

3.4 Topics

Applicants are asked to address one of the five topics listed below and to address the roadmap items (see the [DRI Roadmap](#) for more details) associated with each topic. The association between roadmap items here is neither definitive nor exhaustive: proposals may suggest different selections but should ensure that they can make a significant contribution to implementing the roadmap.

1. Carbon Accounting & Metrics
 - Roadmap: DRI Resource Map [5], Impact Metrics and Allocation Tools [7], User Toolkit [8], Usage Metrics [14], Emission Tracking [21], and Impact Dashboard [23]
2. Green Scheduling
 - Roadmap: Green Scheduling [24]
3. Optimisation & Efficiency

- Roadmap: Impact Metrics and Allocation Tools [7], Emission Tracking [21], and Impact Dashboard [23]
- 4. Training & Capability Building
 - Roadmap: Understanding Behaviour Change [9], Provision of Training [13], Career Pathways [17], Standards for Computational Research [18], Mandatory Training [19], Information Hub [20]
- 5. Institutional & Strategic Change
 - Policy Review [1], Facility Action Plans [2], Scope 1 Targets [3], Procurement Policy [10], Waste and Recycling Policy [11], Collaboration Frameworks [12], Open DRI [15], Mandatory Reporting [16], Sustainable by Design [22]

4. How to apply

The steps of co-creation

In order to create opportunities for co-creation of projects which will enable strong community engagement in this final phase of NetDRIVE the call sets out 6 key steps.

- Preliminary engagement in an online sandpit meeting.
- Submission of outline proposals
- Review of outline proposals
- Preparation and submission of full proposals
- Final engagement at AGM and response to feedback
- Final panel review

Online Sandpit Event

The NetDRIVE project will host an online sandpit event in September. We wish to have representatives from all prospective projects at this event.

Please fill out the expression of interest form and availability poll by 4pm on July 30th if you want to attend:

- [Expression of Interest Form](#)
- [Availability Poll](#)

Stage 1: Outline Proposal

Completed application forms should be submitted to netdrive@eng.ox.ac.uk no later than 4pm, Wednesday, September 16th.

Any enquiries about the process should be submitted to netdrive@eng.ox.ac.uk. Before submitting an enquiry, please check the updates section of [the call page](#).

Before completing the form, please take time to consider the assessment areas for both the outline proposal ([stage 1](#)) and the full proposal ([stage 2](#)) listed below and the guidance to the review panel which explains the process of assessment.

Review of the Outline Proposal

The outline proposals will be reviewed by an independent panel.

Preparation and submission of full proposals

Successful Stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal (stage 2) during the week commencing September 21st. Full proposals should be completed and submitted by email to netdrive@eng.ox.ac.uk by 10am on Monday November 2nd.

Templates and updates

For templates and updates please visit the call web site: uknetdrive.org/netdrive-calls/netdrive-community-project-integration-and-knowledge-translation. On this page you will find:

- Guidance for Applicants
- Guidance for the Review Panel
- Expression of Interest for Sandpit
- Poll for selection of Sandpit date
- Application Template [to be published in September]
- Frequently Asked Questions

Schedule

Stage	Date
Pre-announcement	April 22nd, 2026
Announcement of Opportunity	Tuesday, 21 st July, 2026
Sandpit Expression of Interest Closes	July 30 th , 2026
Sandpit (online)	September 9/10/11 th (*)
Stage 1 submission deadline	10am, Wednesday, September 16th
Stage 1 Review and Decision	Week starting Sept. 21 st
Stage 2 Submission	10am, November 2 nd , 2026
Stage 2 Open Discussion	Bristol, 4 th November, 2026

Panel feedback and response to panel and reflection on discussion	November 13th
Panel	Mid Nov.
Contracts	January, 2027
Target date for start of work	From April 1 st , 2027

(*) Please fill out the poll to share your preferred dates for the sandpit event.

5. How we will assess your application

Assessment Areas for Stage 1

Proposals will be assessed in the following four areas by a review panel:

1. **Vision and Objectives [40%]:** is the proposed work going to break new ground, create real change in the UKRI DRI, and demonstrate thought leadership.
2. **Contacts and Engagement [20%]:** Do the contacts span the necessary range of roles and locations? Is there a robust plan for engagement to create a co-designed Stage 2 proposal? Do the contacts have sufficient experience to provide robust evidence to feed into assessment of the Stage 2 proposal by the review panel?
3. **Inputs [20%]:** are all the relevant community projects included? Do the project outputs that will be used provide a robust foundation for the planned work?
4. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity [20%]:** do the project team and the proposal include constructive or groundbreaking elements of equality, diversity, and inclusivity, addressing both protected characteristics and additional NetDRIVE diversity targets of career stage, professional role and geographical spread? Are the benefits of inclusivity and diversity for the proposed workplan clearly articulated?

Further details of the assessment process are given in the NetDRIVE review panel guidance document.

Outcomes of Stage 1

The NetDRIVE team will notify the lead applicant of the result.

Successful proposals will be invited to submit a full proposal for Stage 2.

A rejected proposal may be invited for re-submission.

For proposals which have been rejected, general UKRI guidance applies. Challenges to their academic judgement will not be discussed. For further information see:

- <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/about-our-decisions-for-grant-or-innovation-loan-applications/>
- <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/>

Comments on the efficiency and equitability of the proposal assessment process are welcome in the context of NetDRIVE's work to develop proposals for greater sustainability but will not alter the rules under which this contest is held.

Assessment Areas for Stage 2

- **Vision and Objectives [30%]:** is the proposed work going to break new ground, create real change in the UKRI DRI, and demonstrate thought leadership.
- **Translation into Action [30%]:** Is there a clear plan for uptake of knowledge and translation into demonstrable progress towards net zero? Do the people, institutions, and organisations that have committed to working with the project team provide a critical mass which can achieve national visibility? Do they provide a clear commitment that they will actively engage to ensure project outputs are translated into action?
- **Measurable Progress [20%]:** Are the outputs clearly defined, achievable, and measurable? Is there a clear plan for stakeholder evaluation of final outputs? Is there a clear plan for addressing roadmap items and does it cover the appropriate range of roadmap items?
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity [20%]:** do the project team and the proposal include constructive or groundbreaking elements of equality, diversity, and inclusivity, addressing both protected characteristics and additional NetDRIVE diversity targets of career stage, professional role and geographical spread? Are the benefits of inclusivity and diversity for the proposed workplan clearly articulated?

Stage 2 Co-design and Submission

The staff effort needed to prepare the Stage 2 proposal will not be funded, but travel, subsistence and reasonable venue costs may be claimed from NetDRIVE if a meeting is organised to develop the proposal. An estimate should be included in the Stage 1 proposal and an expense claim form submitted after the event.

The Stage 2 proposal template and panel guidance will be published in September.

The complete Stage 2 proposal should be submitted by Monday 2nd of November.

There will be an open discussion of proposals on the first day of the NetDRIVE AGM

in Bristol. The project team should ensure that they are able to attend the event on November 4th. The lead investigator will receive written feedback from the panel and will have an opportunity to respond to both the panel and any community feedback before the final decision in December.

6. Successful proposals after Stage 2

6.1 Contract

For academic institutions the award will cover 80% of costs calculated on an FEC basis. The contract will be a collaboration agreement between Leeds University and the lead institution. If funds need to be distributed among multiple collaborating institutions, that must be done via the lead institution. Staff costs should be Directly Incurred, not Directly Allocated. The funds originate from the UKRI DRI programme and have been awarded to Leeds on grant *UKRI910: NetDRIVE2 - Network for sustainable Digital Research Infrastructure Vision and Expertise*.

We do not expect there to be any IPR restrictions. All project outputs should be open.

6.2 During the project

1. The NetDRIVE core team will provide support to projects seeking to contact DRI community members.
2. Funded projects will work with the NetDRIVE team to establish clear knowledge transfer plans but will have full academic freedom to conduct engagement activities according to their own professional standards.
3. Funded projects will have access to NetDRIVE community meetings.
4. Deliverables will be shared with other NetDRIVE community project lead investigators for a two-week review period before being accepted and project team will be asked to respond to any significant feedback. This light-touch peer review process is intended to foster exchange of information and support among projects.

7. Appendix 1: Career Stages

We have identified four career stages by merging categories used in engineering, or professionals in areas relevant to organisational change:

C1: First Stage Researcher (up to the point of PhD), or technical/support staff (degree and 2-4 years' work experience), or equivalent in other relevant professions.

C2: PhD, or 5 or more years software work experience, or equivalent.
C3: Independent researcher, software engineer with management role, or equivalent.
C4: Researcher leading research area or field, or senior management.

These categories are intended to allow us to distinguish between different career stages in a meaningful way without giving undue weighting or disadvantage to specific career paths.

8. Appendix 2: Finances

The budget for the third Call Part B is £338,000 (100% FEC). Institutions will receive 80% of the FEC value through a collaboration agreement with the University of Leeds.

The funds originate from the UKRI DRI programme and have been awarded to the University of Leeds on grant UKRI910: NetDRIVE2 - Network for sustainable Digital Research Infrastructure Vision and Expertise.

Any personal data generated during the proposed work should be managed within the project team: the NetDRIVE core team will only deal with aggregate and anonymised products suitable for sharing.

We do not expect there to be any IPR restrictions. All project outputs should be open.

9. References

Juckes, M., Bane, M., Bulpett, J., Cartmell, K., MacFarlane, M., MacRae, M., Owen, A., Pascoe, C., & Townsend, P. (2023). Sustainability in Digital Research Infrastructure: UKRI Net Zero DRI Scoping Project final technical report. Zenodo.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8199984>

Juckes, M., Pascoe, C., Woodward, L., Vanderbauwhede, W., & Weiland, M. (2022). Interim Report: Complexity, Challenges and Opportunities for Carbon Neutral Digital Research.

Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7016952>

Juckes, M., & Sparrow, S. (2025). Net-Zero Digital Research Infrastructure Vision and Expertise. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14626648>

Maalouf, A., Smith, G., Cutting, J., Juckes, M. & Sparrow, S. (2026). NetDRIVE Funded Community Projects. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21442677>

