CYBERFOCUS INITIAL CALL GUIDANCE

Please send any questions you have about this guidance or the completion of the IAA application form to cyberfocus@lancaster.ac.uk

This guidance note is to be read in conjunction with the CyberFocus initial funding call.

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Please note that applicants must apply caution when entering information into generative AI tools when developing an application. We strongly recommend that you read UKRIs policy on Generative AI before continuing: *UKRI Guidance on Generative AI*.

Applicants and applications are expected to be transparent where they have used generative AI tools in the development of an application.

Applications from Section 3 onwards should be **as anonymised as possible**. Applicant details, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data, will not be passed to the review team and will only be used by the central administration team to process applications, feedback and monitor EDI project performance as per the terms and conditions of the grant. There is an expectation that reviewers should not be able to identify applicants to avoid conflict of interest.

SECTION 1: APPLICANT DETAILS

Coordinating / Principal Investigators (PIs) must have an employment contract at their employing institution for the duration of their proposed project. You **do not** have to have received funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council previously to be successful.

Your details are requested so that the CyberFocus team can contact you regarding your application.

Lancaster University is the data controller for the data we collect on the CyberFocus project, and EPSRC is the data processor. It is important to understand that your personal data may be shared with our funders if requested for audit purposes. This is outlined in our organisation's Data Protection Policy and for further information on how EPSRC handle your personal data, please refer to their Privacy Notice, which can be found here: Privacy notice – UKRI.

Promoting **equality, diversity and inclusion** (EDI) is an integral part of the CyberFocus project and aligned with UKRI's Place-based Impact Acceleration Account vision. Allowing us to collect your data will enable us to report and monitor our funds, enabling us to report on our impact in creating a more sustainable and resilient culture. The answers to the EDI questions will be anonymised and will not be shared with reviewers at any point of the process.

SECTION 2: CO-INVESTIGATOR (CO-I) OR CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (C-PI) DETAILS

We collect this information so we can ensure that communication regarding the submission and any successfully awarded projects are sent to all contacts. Please separate entries with semi-colons so we can delineate the data on receipt.

SECTION 3: PROJECT OUTLINE

Please note this section is intended to be used as a means for us to provide a short description of the types of successful projects awarded. The information provided in the **executive summary** may be used on the CyberFocus website, after successful awards are made and all paperwork has been signed.

The **Project Title** will be the title we will refer to when awarding funding and will be referenced on the Award Letter that is sent to your institution. Please ensure that this is meaningful and is a title that you are happy to be publicised should you be successful.

FUNDING OPTIONS:

Applications should identify the type of funding that their proposed project aligns to. CyberFocus offers the following funding options:

- SEED FUNDING **–** typically £10-30K lasting 3-6 months

This funding supports new partnerships to test their collaborative potential to explore cyber challenges and enable access to Higher Education Institution (HEI) expertise, facilities and identify follow-on funding/activity.

- GROWTH FUNDING **–** typically £20-40K lasting 6-12 months

This funding supports partnerships with clearer routes to accelerate, deepen or broaden impact, with a clear focus on developing partnership sustainability.

- ACCELERATOR FUNDING **–** typically >£40K lasting >12 months

This funding supports mature partnerships to make substantive advances along the impact pathway. **Projects are expected to be matched in cash by the external partner(s).**

- PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FUNDING **–** typically £10-30K lasting 3-6 months

Funding to support activities to explore or enhance the relationship between the cyber and broader NorthWest community and fostering relationships conducive to the region's cyber cluster growth and support. It is expected that projects applying for this fund will have a partner who is a public body or in the public sector.

Public engagement describes the myriads of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit – National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE). We encourage a variety of forms of public engagement and to support novel and innovative projects. When preparing your proposal, we strongly recommend reading the NCCPE guidance and the case studies published here:
https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/introducing-public-engagement

- POLICY FUNDING **–** typically £10-30K lasting 3-6 months

Funding to support activities to explore or enhance the relationship between the cyber and broader NorthWest community and fostering policy advancements conducive to the region's cyber cluster growth and support. It is expected that partners in this application will be linked to policy, e.g. the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

When considering the **start and end dates** of your project, please bear in mind the suggested length of projects for the fund that you have selected. The same applies to the amount of IAA funding being requested.

Table 1 CyberFocus Theme Alignment

Theme	Description	Expected Output
Elevated Cyber Supply Chain Trust and Confidence	Addresses cross-cluster issues by fostering heightened trust and mitigated risk in academia-industry-government cyber innovation partnerships and bolstering confidence in risk-averse customers to adopt cyber innovation.	**Academic Benefits** *(Potential REF Impact Case Studies, Improved Understanding of Collaboration and State of the Art)* and **Partner Benefits** *(New Products/Processes/Services, Enhanced R&D Capability)*
Growth in Sustainable Cyber and Innovation Expertise	Resolves adoption hurdles within interconnected ecosystem clusters through access to expertise and improved capability to overcome challenges in critical client and cyber cluster innovation adoption (procurement, policy, public awareness, talent creation, technical expertise).	People Trained (across Collaborating Organisations) and Follow on Funding/ Activity Secured
Enhanced Cross Cluster Coordination and Interconnections	Transforms participant impact culture (academia, cyber, and critical client clusters) through focused support and engagement resulting in amplified capacity for impactful outcomes and maximised value from partnerships and collaborations.	Policy impacts and Public Engagement activities

CYBER SECURITY BODY OF KNOWLEDGE (CYBOK) ALIGNMENT

Your project should relate to an area referred to in the CyBOK framework. For more information on the CyBOK framework, please follow this link: https://www.cybok.org

This is to ensure that awarded projects have a clear cyber-related focus and will allow the CyberFocus team to monitor the areas of impact within the cyber ecosystem.

It is mandatory that you have an external (non-HEI) partner for this funding schemes. **Please note that all projects will be required to sign an offer letter before funding will be released.** The offer letter will outline the grant terms and conditions.

If you are unsure about the status of your partner, please contact cyberfocus@lancaster.ac.uk. Your partner **should have a principal base of operations in the Northwest**. If you have a partner that is outside of this region, please contact the CyberFocus team **in advance** of submitting your application to discuss their eligibility and impact on the region.

We ask for information regarding the sector(s) in which your partner is based so that we can monitor the impact that CyberFocus is having across the Northwest cyber ecosystem.

Partners on Co-Funded projects will be expected to sign a collaboration agreement outlining things such as payment terms and intellectual property ownership. A template of this agreement can be supplied to the partner, if requested, as part of the preparation of the proposal as this will potentially save time later. Please note: **Only in exceptional circumstances will amendments to the terms of the agreement be considered by the CyberFocus Project Team.**

SECTION 5: PROJECT DETAIL

This section of the form requires the greatest level of detailed input regarding your proposal. Please note that **the questions in this section are scored** by the CyberFocus Proposal Evaluation and Peer Review team, which includes representatives from the consortiums academic and knowledge exchange community. Submissions will also be chaired by representatives from our civic partners to ensure civic alignment.

Each question includes expanded explanatory text within the form. Please read the text carefully and ensure that your answers respond to the detailed information. Responses are limited to 250 words per response.

Your objectives should be clearly aligned to the CyberFocus themes.

PLACE: CIVIC PARTNER STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

GREATER MANCHESTER STRATEGY 2021-2031:

The **Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031** aims to create a greener, fairer, and more prosperous city-region. It focuses on improving wellbeing for the 2.8 million residents through better homes, jobs, and transport. The strategy sets ambitious goals for carbon neutrality by 2038, addressing climate change, and promoting a fairer society by tackling inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION PLAN FOR PROSPERITY

The **Liverpool City Region Plan for Prosperity** outlines a long-term vision for a fairer, stronger, and cleaner region where no one is left behind. It emphasizes creating jobs, boosting skills, improving infrastructure, and supporting businesses. The plan aims to leverage the region's unique economic strengths and tackle challenges to unlock economic growth, fostering an inclusive economy that benefits all residents

LANCASHIRE INNOVATION PLAN 2023-2028

The **Lancashire Innovation Plan 2023-2028** is a blueprint for growth, focusing on leveraging the county's strengths in sectors like advanced manufacturing, energy, aerospace, and digital health. It aims to create a cohesive roadmap to connect assets, consolidate R&D strengths, and engage businesses of all sizes. The plan includes clear objectives and actions under four core pillars: Grow, Expand, Connect, and Tell.

CUMBRIA'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2025-2045 "GOING FOR GROWTH"

Cumbria's Economic Strategy 2025-2045, titled "Going for Growth," sets out a vision for a modern and entrepreneurial economy. It focuses on leveraging regional strengths in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and AgriTech. The strategy emphasizes the importance of devolution for localized decision-making and aims to foster skills development and economic opportunities through initiatives like the Cumbria Commitment

EPSRC ALIGNMENT

Your proposal must align to EPSRC disciplines areas to access these funds. The EPSRC remit for programmes and priorities is available here:

https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/our-research-portfolio-and-priorities/

We are also keen to know if you have received EPSRC IAA funding previously.

SECTION 6: PROJECT FUNDING

Please read the additional expanded description in the form and ensure that you adhere to them. The inclusion of VAT and appropriate costings are your responsibility. We strongly advise you to work with your internal Costings teams in advance of submission.
Please use the Excel budget template provided to upload and submit with your application.

Suggested Headings:

- Staffing (DI and DA)
- Consumables
- Travel and subsistence
- Equipment

This question is assessed by the CyberFocus Proposal Evaluation Peer Review group for deliverability, eligibility, and suitability in line with your proposal.

Full Economic Costs (fEC) are not applicable/eligible, so budgets s**hould not** include estates and indirect costs.

Accelerator Funding projects are expected to have a cash match contribution from the external partner.

SECTION 7: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The questions in this section help us address the Intellectual Property (IP) position (is it being managed by my institution's IP Office; is it patented; is it owned or jointly owned by another party, etc.) If you need any further IP and Commercialisation Support, please contact your Tech Transfer Office / IP & Commercialisation team in advance of submitting your application.

SECTION 8: CONFIRMATIONS

RELEVANT AUTHORITY

Your application must be approved by a relevant authority (Head of Department, Faculty Dean, Finance Director etc) before being submitted for review. The CyberFocus team will require evidence of this prior to any awards being made. Successful applicants will be provided with a means to do so and further instructions will follow accordingly.

ETHICS APPROVAL

Your application must be approved through your internal University Research Ethics process before being submitted for review. This should include any partner due diligence measures undertaken and address any trusted research issues that may be relevant. The CyberFocus team will require evidence of this prior to any awards being made and please be aware this may also include a specific CyberFocus Ethical Review and approval. Successful applicants will be provided with a means to do so and further instructions will follow accordingly.

HEECA TRAINING

The Higher Education Export Controls Association (HEECA) is the national network to develop, maintain and promote best practice in Export Control Compliance across the UK HEI Sector. HEECA is free to join and offer a number of resources to consider when developing approaches to research compliance, including a specific training module on Strategic Export Controls. Given the nature of Cyber Focus, a condition of receiving funds is that PIs and relevant Co-Is should undertake this training and the Team will require evidence that this has been completed successfully. For more information relating to HEECA see the link below or talk to your institutions Research Office or equivalent.

https://www.heeca.org.uk

SECTION 9: SUBMISSION AND NEXT STEPS

It is a requirement to confirm that you have read and agree to the text in this section, or you will not be able to submit your proposal.

The IAA process is a competitive funding round that is expected to receive applications from each of the seven university partners. Unsuccessful submissions will be provided with feedback from the review team. An unsuccessful submission does not exclude you from re-submitting your revised proposal in a later funding call. Successful applicants will be contacted with feedback and next steps to the submission process.

The timeline for applications, review dates, and any further milestones, will be detailed on the CyberFocus website: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cybersecurity/cyber-focus/