

FOLLOW-ON FUND – ELIGIBILITY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. What types of project are eligible for a Follow-On Fund or Follow-on Fund Pathfinder Grant?

Projects that build upon the outputs of recent NERC-funded research activity are eligible, other than further “blue-sky” projects and applied research for commercial partners. Potential applicants from NERC’s research centres should apply to the internal [Innovation A and Innovation B schemes](#).

Applications are invited for projects whose aim is to develop products or services based on NERC-funded research outputs and capabilities.

Projects do not have to be based on proprietary, patentable intellectual property. For example, substantial and possibly unique databases and other information sources within the NERC research community might form the basis of successful service businesses.

The scale of the opportunity can vary, from relatively modest through to very large. All projects must have demonstrable economic potential, even if only modest, and are likely to deliver some form of societal or environmental benefit.

2. Assessment criteria for Follow-On Fund and Follow-on Fund Pathfinder Grants

Applications are assessed against the following criteria:

Scientific quality – the proposed project must be sound and based on a scientifically excellent programme of work from within NERC’s remit.

Commercial potential – the commercial potential of the idea including: potential benefits to customers and end-users; evidence of market need, including size of market, potential value, nature and extent of existing and potential competition; strength of IPR position and strategy; level and availability of resources needed to achieve successful commercial uptake.

Quality of the technical development plan – plausibility of strategy for technical development; quality of project management plan; clarity and appropriateness of technical milestones.

Quality of the commercial development plan – clarity and plausibility of commercialisation strategy for the proposed offering in the chosen market segment(s); evidence of clear and realistic commercial milestones; quality of project management; engagement with commercial stakeholders.

Added value – evidence that the project is cost-effective; evidence that funding is likely to significantly increase either the likelihood of appropriate and effective commercialisation and/or the exploitation value of the intellectual property concerned.

Assessments are made by the NERC Proof of Concept Panel whose members are experts in technology commercialisation and listed in [“Moderating Panel Membership”](#). Pathfinder applications may be assessed in the office by NERC’s Head of Knowledge Exchange.