

Guidance for Directors' Strategic Initiatives

Each Centre Director is invited to propose a project of strategic relevance to the UK DRI nationally. Projects should not be a simple continuation or expansion of ongoing research within the centre but should capture new ground and bring to the national effort a new capacity or direction. They should also, explicitly, promote cross-centre collaboration either by providing a significant new benefit to researchers from multiple centres, directly establishing new collaborations or otherwise introducing new expertise or approaches that will advance the institute's aims. Projects should either incorporate a translational element or explain how they advances our translational agenda.

Criteria:

Initiatives should meet the following criteria:

- Novel and ambitious.
- Involve or support more than one UK DRI Centre.
- Establish a novel, long-term vision and encompass a clear path for the further development of that vision, attracting external funding beyond the initial UK DRI financial support.
- Incorporate a translational component.

The award:

Each project will be funded at up to £2M over a four-year period. In light of the strategic importance of these projects to the future of the UK DRI and the scale of the associated financial investment, each proposal will be subject to a rigorous assessment and governance process.

Proposal process:

Proposals are subject to internal and external review and require final approval from the UK DRI Board of Trustees. The following steps should be followed:

1. The appropriate Centre Director prepares a two-page concept paper.
2. The concept paper is considered by the Directors and based on their response is either moved on to the next step, revised and resubmitted or abandoned.
3. If and when the proposal has the support of the Directors, the two-page concept paper is shared with the Board of Trustees as an FYI.
4. In parallel with step 3, the Centre Director develops an expanded, more complete proposal (up to 10 pages) including the context or background, importance of the programme to the broader DRI community, collaborative and translational opportunities, programme details such as the overall aim, steps, methods, milestones, personnel and budget, relevant

Founding funders:



references, and timelines, Gantt charts and tables as required. The expanded proposal is submitted to the Directors.

5. Subject to the Directors' approval the expanded proposal is shared with the other Centre Directors who are each asked to prepare written reviews. The combined anonymous reviews are shared with the applicant and the proposal is discussed at the next meeting of the Operational Board.
6. Assuming continued support for the proposal, the relevant Centre Director revises it to take account of the Operational Board's comments.
7. The revised proposal is sent for external peer review by at least three experts. The Centre Director is given an opportunity to respond to the reviews and/or revise the proposal. (The Directors may seek additional informal advice from SAB members or others.)
8. If the Directors remain supportive, they prepare a package for approval by the Board of Trustees, including:
 - a. The two-page concept paper.
 - b. Centre Directors and external peer reviews.
 - c. Revised proposal and accompanying written response.
 - d. Check list of sensitive issues.
 - e. A recommendation for funding.
9. The Board of Trustees review the package and either confirm funding or provide a written account of their reasons to decline funding (at which point either further discussions and/or revisions are made or the proposal is withdrawn).

Annual review:

As with all UK DRI awards, funded projects will be subject to an annual internal review whereby the project director will present a written progress report to the Operational Board. Although it is possible that a project that is clearly failing to achieve its aims could be terminated, the emphasis of the annual review will be to identify and address weaknesses and to incorporate any relevant developments that may strengthen the project.

A summary of progress of all such project will be shared with the Board of Trustees as part of our annual progress report.

Version	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Notes
1.0	5 Feb 20	Aoife Kiely	UK DRI Directors	First version of official guidance