

Internet of Food Things Network+ Call

Call for proposals for Internet of Food Things Network Plus pilot studies

Closing date for applications: **11:00 4th November 2019**

The Internet of Food Things Network Plus aims to create a sustainable network of academic and industry practitioners to catalyse the food digital economy. The Network is interdisciplinary and includes expertise from developers of digital technologies, engineers, food scientists and technologists, catapults, the EPSRC Food Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Food, retailers, social sciences and regulators (Food Standards Agency and the global data standards agency GS1). The scope encompasses the full food supply chain from manufacturer through to and including consumers.

Summary

Applicants are invited to apply for short-term pilot research study funding from the Internet of Food Things Network Plus, set up as a priority challenge area by the Digital Economy Theme (DE) led by EPSRC. These pilot studies will be no longer than 6 months in duration and are intended to test new ideas or create novel linkages between research areas.

The priority areas for applications are as follows:

1. Research that develops our understanding of digital collaboration amongst stakeholders in the food production supply chain drawing upon the recommendations of the IoFT Digital Collaboration report
2. Research that deepens our understanding of, and demonstrates applications for, Industry technologies including IoT, telecommunications, robotics, AI, etc. across the food production supply chain
3. Legal aspects of managing complex data sets, governance of complex data sets and novel digital business models

We are seeking applications that also consider other cross-cutting themes relating to the food sector, namely:

- Traceability, transparency and disclosure as they relate to complex supply chains
- Food safety and fraud
- Efficiency, productivity and sustainability and their contribution to the climate crisis
- Reduction of food waste across all stages of the food chain

- Distributed computing/digital communication technologies and related cyber risks

Criteria

- Individual projects can request up to £40,000 total funding (total spend up to £50,000 as per FEC 80% funding). Applicants will be awarded 80% of the full cost, and when invoices are submitted they should be for 80% and a statement should also be submitted showing the full cost.
- Projects are expected to last for a maximum of 6 months.
- Projects must be interdisciplinary in nature and should preferably involve more than one institution or organisation. Interdepartmental collaboration is the minimum acceptable level of interdisciplinary; industry involvement is strongly encouraged.
- Projects must also involve and engage with real users
- Projects should be able to demonstrate reasonable prospects of continuation funding to enable sustainable development.
- **Funding is for academic research teams led by UK Universities and only UK-based academic salary costs will be covered.**
- Applications must be made on the IoFT application form and must not exceed 8 pages, minimum font size 11 Arial. They must be accompanied by a Gantt chart project plan.
- Applicants must be eligible for EPSRC funding. A list of eligible organisations to apply to EPSRC is provided at: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/> As this call is a targeted funding opportunity provided via EPSRC funding, higher education institutions, and some research council institutes and independent research organisations are eligible to apply. For funding rules, guidelines and guidance on the type of support that may be sought please see: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/>.
- We do agree GDPR compliant policies and Data Processing Agreements between the applying institution and the University of Lincoln. If these cannot be agreed within a certain timeframe, we reserve the right to abandon the contract process and select another application.

Proposals will be assessed in two stages: The review process is a paper exercise based solely on the completed application form. The review process will be carried out by the IoFT Network Plus Leadership Team. Members of the IoFT Advisory Board will also conduct reviews dependent on their expertise.

Stage 1: Preliminary sift. This is done against the criteria for applications e.g. relevance to Network, fit to priority areas etc. and correct completion of the application form.

Stage 2: Detailed Review of remaining proposals. Reviewers will assess the applications against the following criteria. Marks will be recorded on a spreadsheet form and scores amalgamated. The prioritised list will then be reviewed by the Leadership Team in terms of topics addressed, and the highest ranked projects funded subject to available funds and quality criteria having been met.

- Suitability for the call: Is it DIGITAL ECONOMY? Is it research? Is it novel? Is it IoFT? Is it relevant to the call themes; Articulation of problem and “so-what?” factor (what makes this project stand out?) Identifying the potential to inform the research challenges for IoFT is encouraged. How will the project help grow and sustain the IoFT Network?
- Standard EPSRC assessment criteria will also be applied: Quality; Importance; Impact; The applicant’s ability to deliver the proposed project within budget and in time;
- Evidence of a planning and management process for the duration of the project will be required.
- Each application will receive three reviews which will be marked blind.
- Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback if they wish.

Pilot Project Management

The IoFT Network operations team will be the point of liaison between the IoFT investigators and the successful pilot projects. The Pilot projects will be required to keep us informed of progress (e.g. via reports, a web site or a blog) and take part in network activities as appropriate to the project. Projects will need to submit a report on the activities and outcomes of the projects, along with their invoice within a month of the end of the pilot project (a template will be provided).

Regarding intellectual assets created as part of the funded projects, we will follow the EPSRC guidelines: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/ip/>. It is expected that the outputs of any project will be shared with the Internet of Food Things Network Plus operations team for inclusion in the project web site and other promotional materials to inform the Network as a whole and wider public in an appropriate and timely manner in such a way as to achieve some of the main aims of the funding, that is growing the Network and its associated research base.

The funding will be awarded via a sub-contract with the University of Lincoln, which will specify the agreed terms and allow for any issues with respect to background IP to be highlighted.

Key dates

Call formally announced **18 September 2019**

Deadline for applications submitted by e-mail to the admin team at jduarte@lincoln.ac.uk :
4th November 2019

Successful applicants will be notified by **25th November 2019**

Successful projects starting by **1st February 2020** subject to contracts.

Projects to present their projects at an event in June/July 2020

Completion should be by **1st August 2020**.

Contacts

For further information on the Internet of Food Things Network+ visit <http://www.foodchain.ac.uk>

Please contact the IoFT Network+ administrator (jduarte@lincoln.ac.uk) with any queries.