**KE Sectoral Challenge Fund Guidance Notes and Application Form**

Projects eligible for funding though this Knowledge Exchange Challenge Fund will have an identified Knowledge Exchange or an innovation element but will be relatively short-term projects. Outcomes must align with the Scottish Funding Council’s (SFC) Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF) priority outcomes (see table 1 below). The university has confirmed to SFC in our outcome agreement that all outcomes will be strived for but that outcomes 1 to 4 will be prioritised.

**Table 1:**

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| **SFC Desired Outcomes for Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF) AY2025-2026** |
| 1. **Outcome one (demand stimulation):** working with Scotland’s enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business networks, Interface, and others, Scottish HEIs will have helped to increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for university services. |
| 1. **Outcome two** (**simplification / commercialisation**): in partnership with the Enterprise Agencies (EAs) and Interface, Scottish HEIs as a sector will have demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities. |
| 1. **Outcome three (simplification / greater innovation):** in partnership with the EAs and Interface, Scottish HEIs will, at a national level, have made strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM). |
| 1. **Outcome four (entrepreneurialism):** Scottish HEIs as a sector will have made a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses. |
| 1. **Outcome five (international):** in partnership with Scottish Development International, Connected Scotland and others, Scottish HEIs will have pooled their knowledge and networks, and shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally (operating under Scotland’s International Framework). |
| 1. **Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact):** Building on current and good practice Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government’s ambitions for inclusive growth |
| 1. **Outcome seven (equality and diversity):** Building on current and good practice HEIs will have ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF. |

**Aims and examples of projects eligible for the KE Sectoral Challenge Fund**

**The KE Challenge Fund aims to:**

1. Address business and social enterprise-led challenges that can be tackled through accessing university expertise across different sectors;
2. Enable enhanced engagement between the university and innovative local companies;
3. Encourage projects that involve collaboration across the UHI partnership.

**Examples of Projects eligible for the KE Sectoral Challenge Fund**

The types of suitable activities for the KE challenge fund will be broad ranging.

All funded projects will have a knowledge exchange or innovative element at their core and there will be a requirement for the applicants to provide a final report which should drafted to be suitable for use as a case study.

The type of projects anticipated include:

* Feasibility studies or pilot projects for new business-led products, processes, or services;
* Development of new KE initiatives and programmes;
  + Initiatives aimed at increasing the demand and quality of engagement from businesses for the university’s services;
  + Projects promoting UHI expertise and demonstrating how accessing this expertise can help businesses to innovate;
  + Projects that will help simplify business access to the knowledge and expertise in the university;
  + Activities that will make strategic use of university expertise/ knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy;
  + Project aimed at making a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses;
  + Projects promoting research commercialisation;
    - E.g., identifying and increasing awareness of intellectual property commercialisation opportunities across the UHI partnership.

**Eligible costs**

1. Travel and subsistence support;
2. Support for UHI and its Academic Partners staff time to engage in the project;
3. Assistance with meeting or workshop costs (business focussed);
4. Other costs – minimal other costs may be considered but most of the funding is expected to cover staff time and T&S.

Projects that involve curriculum development are not eligible unless these involve bespoke company/sector CPD.

**NB: This list is not exhaustive and, other project types may also be considered.**

**Knowledge Exchange Sectoral Challenge Fund Application**

One Health (including Active Health and Rural Health) □

Aquaculture □Creative Industries □ Energy □

Land and Communities □ Net Zero □Tourism □   WaterHub □ Joint application □

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| **Contact Details** | |
| Name of Academic Partner |  |
| Contact Name |  |
| Job Title |  |
| Contact Tel No |  |
| Email Address |  |

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| **Funding Details** | |
| Details of any cross-UHI partnerships/collaborations involved in the project where applicable (AP’s /Institutes/Centres/Unit, etc.) |  |
| Industrial Partner details (if applicable) and any matched funding  (cash or in-kind). |  |
| Amount of Funding applied for | £ |
| Applicant has confirmed with the Industrial Partner (or any other third party involved in the project) that they are aware of Subsidy Control Act 2022 and are satisfied the limits will be adhered to as identified below? \*\*\*  If yes – please attach evidence of confirmation with this KE/Innovation fund application. | Yes □ No □ N/A □ |
| Please provide a brief breakdown of the anticipated spend. |  |
| Anticipated duration, with start and end date for project |  |

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| UHI Research Ethics Committee | |
| This project will need approval from UHI Research Ethics Committee (REC) and/or other permissions prior to delivery  (e.g. Home Office licence, GDPR/Privacy Policy, etc.) | Yes □ No □    If yes, please provide details: |

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| **Proposal details** | |
| Type of delivery model to be supported e.g. scoping study, travel support, CPD etc. |  |
| Provide details of which SFC KEIF priority outcome (see table 1, for details) this proposal will help to meet and how? |  |
| Which sectoral group annual target(s) would this proposal help to meet? |  |
| Has an application been submitted previously for this proposed project? If so to whom and what was the outcome? Details of why the project does not comply with SFC Innovation Voucher eligibility rules? | Yes □      No □ |

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| **Proposal Application** |
| Please provide a short overview of the project proposal (guideline - 1000 words). The proposal should include:   * Project Title; * Main aims and objectives of the proposed project; * A brief outline of the proposed project programme; * Outcomes and impacts of proposed project; * The next steps – beyond the end of the project; * A budget table showing activities against costs indicating where relevant the distribution of costs between UHI Academic Partners;   - As well as the company contribution (including ‘in-kind’ value of any aspects);   * An indication of whether up to 50 % of the funding is required upfront to cover immediate costs with a justification for why this is essential; * Project deliverables; * Any risks with proposed project; * Additionality factor - will the proposed activity go ahead if the application is not funded? |
| Any other relevant details: |

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| **Intellectual Property (IP)** | |
| The development of new IP is not necessarily a prerequisite for success in the sectoral challenge fund. However, early consideration of IP is essential at this stage for appropriate arrangements to be put in place at the outset of the project | |
| Please provide details of how any IP will be managed, including its identification, and demonstrating agreement between the relevant partners on who will have access to any background IP and ownership of any foreground new IP - including the management of any confidentiality issues. |  |

**TO BE COMPLETED BY SECTORAL GROUP REVIEW PANEL**

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| **Application Form Checklist** | |
| Application is coherent with the vision of the KEIF strategic plan? | Yes □ No □ |
| Outputs and/or impacts have been highlighted within application? | Yes □ No □ |
| Additionality: Will the proposed activity be going ahead if the application is not funded? | Yes □ No □ |
| Does your application fall within the SFC Desired Outcomes for AY2024-2025? | Yes □ No □ |

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| Amount of funding approved by panel | £ |
| Funding released | End of project □  50% start and 50% end □  At start of project □  (confirm reasons why) |
| Outputs agreed e.g. report, images, case study etc. |  |
| Is Letter of Agreement required? | Yes □ No □  If yes – name letter of agreement to be sent to: |
| Is contract required? | Yes □ No □  If yes speak to legal department |
| Date: | Signature:  (panel) |
| Date: | Signature:  (academic) |

**\*\*\* Any Grant awarded will be on the basis that it is a Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and below the limit in the Subsidy Control Act and therefore exempt from the subsidy control requirements by virtue of Section 36(1) of The Subsidy Control Act 2022. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 allows an enterprise (e.g. sole traders, partnerships, companies, associations etc. referred to here as “organisation”) to receive up to £315,000 in Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) in a 3-year period (consisting of the elapsed part of the current financial year and the 2 previous financial years) in subsidies. MFA subsidies cumulate with each other and with other subsidies that fall within the category of 'Minimal or SPEI financial assistance. It is the organisation’s responsibility to check that it is eligible and please note that the above MFA subsidy allowance threshold may change, and by the very nature of applying for or accepting a subsidy you are declaring that you will not exceed the permitted MFA subsidy allowance threshold and any grant will be conditional on the organisation’s written confirmation.**