Public Engagement Fund 2025

Application Form Guidance

This guidance provides information for those interested in applying to the ‘Public Engagement Fund.’ This fund aims to help widen participation by involving and engaging members of the public who may not usually interact with data science to take an interest and have a voice

We are offering a **minimum of £1,000** up to a **maximum of £10,000** of funding to projects. However, we are open to informal discussions with anyone interested in applications less than £1,000.

Applications close at **5pm** on **Monday 14th October**.

Please read the below information, which will support you in completing your application

# What’s the purpose of the Public Engagement Fund?

In 2022 – 2023, [Research Data Scotland](https://www.researchdata.scot/) (RDS) funded eight [projects](https://www.researchdata.scot/our-work/shaping-our-services/public-engagement/public-engagement-fund/). The work funded had a great impact, reaching over 2,700 participants including people who had not engaged with data science before. For many projects, the effect of the fund is still ongoing, through continuing partnerships and additional funding from other organisations.

With such great success, we wanted to open the opportunity again, in hopes of continuing to grow the impact gained from our initial pilot.

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This fund aims to:

* Help communicate the importance of data research by highlighting its impact on society, groups, and / or individuals.
* Showcase cutting-edge data research to the public in ways they can understand and get involved.
* Involve and engage members of the public who may not usually interact with science.
* Create new partnerships by bringing together researchers and the public to shape data research approaches.

# Application Guidelines

The guide below provides further information to support each section of the application form. Please read each section to ensure you have answered the application questions accurately, to help us understand how you meet the funding criteria.

## Contact information

Please complete this section with the details of the main person responsible for the project. We will use these details to let you know whether your application has been successful. If successful, this person will be the contact we keep in touch with throughout the project, unless we are told otherwise.

## About your organisation

This information will be used to identify your organisation and help our panel understand a little bit more about them. Please provide the registered organisation name, as well as the registered charity number, if this is applicable. Whether you are a charity or not will not impact your success.

In the organisation description, we’re looking to understand a bit more about your organisation and why it was set up. We are primarily using the information to identify your organisation, so we recommend completing this in roughly no more than 200 words.

To help you answer this question, you may wish to consider:

* What does your organisation aim to achieve?
* How many people work or volunteer for your organisation?
* What previous public engagement work have you been involved with?
* What was the result of your work?

## Finance

In this section, we want to know about the amount your organisation is requesting and its financial stability. This will allow us to review project feasibility and determine how we plan any funding with you.

### Total Amount and Budget Overview

You will be asked how much you need for your project and a breakdown of how this will be spent. The details of how the funding will be spent do not have to be exact at this stage. However, we would like a clear idea of how the requested amount will be spent. Items you may wish to include in your budget could include:

* Staff and freelancer pay
* Activity development
* Rental or event space
* Expenses – such as food, travel, and accommodation
* Equipment
* Participant payments - You can align to [Scottish Government guidance](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2024/02/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/documents/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/govscot%3Adocument/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time.pdf) or use your own guidelines if you have them

All items budgeted for must support the engagement activity. Successful applicants will receive 100% of the funding they apply for.

We would also like to know about funding covered by your own organisation or other funding that will be used to support this engagement activity. This will help us check the feasibility of your project.

### Match funding

It is important for us to understand if this project is reliant upon further funding support from elsewhere, and whether this is already in place. We also need to know who is providing the funding to ensure there is no conflict of interest. Please do not include any other funding your organisation receives, or expects to receive, outside the proposed project.

### Reserves

We want to know if you have a reserves policy. If you have one, we will ask for you to send us a link to a copy or attach a copy by email and send it to [engage@researchdata.scot](mailto:engage@researchdata.scot). If you do not have one, this will not necessarily affect your application. However, if you select ‘No’, we then ask you to briefly outline your reserves plan, so that we can understand your organisation's current financial position. There is no word limit, to ensure you are happy with the detail you provide.

All applicants are asked about how many months of running cost they have in reserve. This will help us understand your financial stability as an organisation. If reserves are shorter than the length of your project, and your application is successful, we may ask for further information on your organisation's financial security.

## About your project

We want to hear about what you have in mind for your project. Why does it matter, and why should we fund it? This is your chance to sell your project. We suggest a total word limit of 1,500 for this section. This is to help guide you with how much information we need.

### Type of project and title

We would like to know whether your project is a one-off activity, part of a programme of work, a pilot for future work, or something else. This will help our reviewers understand project diversity and how your project sits within your programme of work.

The project title does not have to be the exact name of your project, however it is useful for clarity to help us identify each application we’re scoring.

### What are the aims and objectives of your project, including area of work?

Use this space to briefly explain what you want your project to do. Here you might want to include:

* How long you expect the project to run for
* An outline of your activity plan, including aims, objectives, and any partners/collaborators organisations you plan to work with.
* What are the steps you will need to take from start to finish?

This should show us clearly and simply what you expect to carry out using any funding provided to you for this project. We would like your answer to be succinct, so we suggest providing your answer in approximately 200 words.

### Who are you aiming to engage and why?

This is where we would like you to briefly outline the audience that your project aims to engage and who will ultimately benefit once it's complete. Your response should be approximately 100 words. Your audience could include:

* People living in a certain area in Scotland
* Specific age groups
* People with a health condition e.g. Dementia, Cancer
* People with disabilities

This is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully gives you an idea of who you may wish to reach. Who you choose will not affect your application, but it should be justified in later sections. However, please note, we will be making sure a diverse range of audiences are covered across our funded projects.

### What are the intended outcomes for the work?

Now that you have defined your audience, we want to know what your work aims to achieve for them and data science. If your project will also help a wider audience beyond your defined audience, you can talk about it here. Please also include project timescales, key milestones and any engagement techniques you intend to use. Some other questions which may help you answer include:

* Will your project improve public understanding of data? How will you develop this understanding and how will it help the audience you’re engaging in future?
* Will your project involve members of the public in data research or development? How will they be involved and how will it make a difference?
* What difference do you think your project will make outside the intended audience?
* Is there previous work you have done that you can use as evidence to support the impact you think your project will have?

Your response should be approximately 250 words.

### How will you evaluate the success of your activity?

In the previous section, you will have explained the outcomes of your work. Here, we want you to show how you will know whether or not you have achieved those outcomes. To help answer this question you should consider how you will:

* Calculate attendee figures
* Know you’ve reached the right audience
* Determine audience understanding over time
* Gather thoughts, opinions, and feedback from your attendees
* Record changes to the way you or any partner/collaborator organisations work due to the engagement

Your response should be approximately 200 words.

### How do you plan to communicate and share your work?

When you have finished your project with us, we don’t want it to be forgotten. Here, we’d like to know how your project will be shared more widely to help others, and hopefully help you do further great work in future. In this section, you may wish to consider:

* Partners/collaborators you would like to reach out to and ask to share the work you have done
* Websites, social media and other platforms you might use
* The impact sharing your work will have

Your response should be approximately 150 words

### How does this project align with the RDS strategy, values and key principles?

We want to ensure that any project we fund aligns with our own strategy, values, and principles. You can find further information on these using the links below:

[RDS Strategy and Business Plan](https://www.researchdata.scot/about-rds/strategy-and-business-plan/)

[RDS Values and Principles](https://www.researchdata.scot/about-rds/vision-and-mission/)

Your response should be about 250 words and should show some examples of how you align. This could include:

* How your public engagement work will support our strategy to improve the quality of life for people in Scotland
* How the RDS values (integrity, transparency, courage, collaboration and humility) would be implemented in an activity or workshop
* How your work will be carried out according to our key principles to promote public good and ensure safety, security, and trust

### Please provide details of who will be responsible for the management of the grant and delivering the activities.

This will help our reviewers understand who is running the activity and how the project will operate. Please structure this section as follows:

Name  
Job Title  
Role in the project, including any supporting information such as past experience.

There is no limit to how long this section can be, as we are aware project and activity leads will vary across applications. However, we encourage you to please only complete this section for its specified purpose and to be succinct in your answer.

## Additional information

It is not essential for you to complete this section. However, this will help us improve the fund in future.

### Is there anything else you would like to let us know about your project?

Please use this space to tell us any important information that you think we should consider in support of your application. You should include anything that you feel you could not answer in earlier questions. Please note, it will not be scored but may provide further context for our Application Manager, and help develop future application forms. There is no word limit in this section.

### How did you hear about the Public Engagement Fund?

This is not a compulsory question, but your response will help us understand how we are reaching people and help us improve how we let people know about the fund in future.

### Do you have any feedback for us, so that we may improve the application process in future?

How did you find the application process with us? We’d like to hear any and all feedback, so that we can improve in future. Some things to consider could include:

* Ability to find our website / the funding page
* Clarity of this guidance
* Ease of completing the application and budget request form.

Your feedback will not affect whether your application is successful but can help us improve our process if we run this fund in future.

# Final notes

Please complete [online form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xnaQA_ygOkWZxKlibkIhci_Sk5u8eX1Br_YFM2XIii5UQ0RLSEs0TU5DR0NYOTI4MVFQT1FSMzA5Wi4u) here. If you have any queries, please email [Engage@researchdata.scot](mailto:Engage@researchdata.scot)

If you would like to hear more about the latest Research Data Scotland updates, [sign up to our newslette](https://www.researchdata.scot/newsletter/)r.