

Guidance notes for funding applications to: M2D (Models to Decisions)

The Models to Decisions (M2D) Project is an EPSRC, ESRC, NERC and AHRC funded network which facilitates communication between a wide range of researcher disciplines and end user / decision makers. The over-arching aims of the network are (i) to develop a broad and fully inclusive community of researchers and practitioners to address substantive problems in model-based decision-making under uncertainty and (ii) to develop new methodologies, informed by understanding users' needs, and promulgate them to decision makers.

The M2D network will fund projects based on **three central themes**:

- Uncertainty Quantification
- From Models to Decision
- Communicating Uncertainty

We will operate a continuous open call for applications throughout the lifetime of the network. Applications will be reviewed and assessed by the Expert Panel, which will meet every three months.

We are inviting proposals for feasibility studies within the following four schemes:

Pilot Project Scheme: will fund innovative projects expected to lead to a grant application. These should have investigators from at least **two** or more **disciplines** and clear engagement with **decision makers**.
Funding limit: £25k. Maximum duration: 6 months.

Embedded Research Scheme: will fund network members to spend a short period working in a different discipline or with a non-academic partner. **Funding limit: £10k. Maximum duration: 3 months.**

Early Career Researcher Scheme: will fund early career researchers for **3 months** to work up an idea that could lead to a **fellowship application**. Early career researchers are defined by M2D as individuals who are within eight years of the award of their PhD, or equivalent professional training, and who have yet to secure a permanent [academic] faculty appointment / fellowship. Please note that M2D feasibility funding is not intended to support PhD research. PhD students may however apply as Early Career Researchers if they can provide evidence that their PhD will be completed before the start date of the proposed M2D Project. **Funding limit: £10k. Maximum duration: 3 months.**

The workshops, sandpits and short courses scheme. Proposals for workshops, sandpits and short courses (**max length 3 days**) will need to demonstrate the following:

- That they are addressing current topics of relevance.
- A need from end users / decision makers.
- Is a multidisciplinary event.
- Maximum size 50 participants (smaller events are also fine).
- That 50% of the attending delegates will be Early Career Researchers.
- That non-academic involvement and inclusion in the event is highly encouraged.

Funding limit: £5k. Maximum duration: 3 days.

Sandpits: In exceptional and well justified circumstances, funds of up to £10K may be requested.

To qualify for this additional funding support, all the above criteria must be met to a high standard. In addition, it must be clearly demonstrated within the proposal that the event intends to generate novel ideas and collaborations that will lead on directly to small [fundable] pilot projects.

As a guide: Of the total funding requested, up to £5k might be spent on organising the event, while the remaining funds may contribute towards the support of a small (3 month) pilot project, as generated by the Sandpit.

*In very exceptional circumstances, the panel may be able to consider slightly higher amounts for sandpits and their outputs. If this is something that you would like to explore, please get in contact with Emma Clarke at m2d@exeter.ac.uk to discuss.

***NB:** funding limits are maximums to work within, rather than targets to be achieved.*

Proposals should follow the guidance given below and should be submitted via email to the network Project Manager Dr Emma Clarke (e.v.f.clarke@exeter.ac.uk). Applications received 10 working days in advance of the next Expert Panel meeting (as publicised on the website) will be reviewed at that Expert Panel meeting date. Decisions will be announced within 10 working days of the Expert Panel meeting date.

Eligibility and Funding Rules

The Principal Investigator (PI) should be a member of the M2D network. Please refer to the M2D Members section of the Website for details on how to join.

To be eligible project PIs must be staff (including current postdocs and PDRA's) working at an eligible UK institution. Please refer to the EPSRC Eligibility of organisations webpage to check your institution's eligibility. <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/eligibility/organisations>

Funding from this call may be used to pay:

- salaries*,
- consumables,
- travel & subsistence, and
- small equipment costs,

directly incurred by the study and for the **duration only** of the study. All cost requests should be supported with clear and valid justification clearly explaining how the cost will benefit the project.

*Salaries follow rules set by the EPSRC and can only be paid to staff or postdoc / PDRA's at eligible UK institutions. Please note that this funding is not intended to support the (PI) salaries of academic faculty members on full time permanent contracts, as a "top-up fund" to an existing salary or to fund PhD research. In exceptional

circumstances, we may consider supporting someone who is in between early career contracts and is using this as an opportunity to work up an application to a larger grant or fellowship scheme.

Funding from this call **cannot** be applied to:

- computer equipment**,
- high cost software and licencing materials**,
- publication costs,
- indirect costs,
- estates and infrastructure costs,
- overheads and bench fees.

Under exceptional circumstances we may be able to consider, the cost of supplementary software and hardware to augment an existing workstation. However, this would largely depend upon the cost of the item and would require **clear and specific justification of the resource and cost in the proposal.

Any questions regarding proposed costs or eligibility should be directed to Emma Clarke (e.v.f.clarke@exeter.ac.uk) as early as possible.

Each proposal must clearly state which funding scheme it is applying to and the total requested funds must not exceed the maximum allocated to the scheme. Studies are funded for a fixed term of either, 6 months for pilot studies, 3 months for embedded researcher and early career researchers, or 3 days for workshops, sandpits and short courses. Studies must be completed within these timeframes following the agreed starting date of the project. All studies must finish before 31 December 2018.

Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed and ranked by the M2D Expert Panel. Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. **Alignment with Network Goals:** how well the proposal aligns with the goals of the network and the chosen theme(s).
2. **Scientific Quality:** the scientific quality of the project, including the appropriate use of methodology.
3. **Interdisciplinary & User Involvement:** How well the project furthers and develops interactions between the different scientific areas of the network and end user engagement.
4. **Outputs:** How relevant any outputs of the proposed project are to the network, and how likely it is that these outputs are achieved.

The proposals for each scheme will be ranked according to these criteria and the top proposals for each group (up to the budget limit) will be funded.

Guidance for Proposals: Proposals should be written according to the following guidelines.

The application has three parts:

1. Application Cover Form
2. Principal Investigators CV (only)
3. Project Proposal (**maximum 2 pages,**)

1. Application Cover Form

- Clearly identify the project investigators, co-investigators and (optional) named post-doc, including their respective institutions.
- Identify the project collaborators (researchers from different institutions and end users / decision makers).
- The proposed starting date and duration for the project
- An itemised list of the funding items requested, including amounts and justification as space allows. More detailed justification for resources should be detailed in the proposal.

2. Principal Investigators CV

- Only the Principal investigators CV is required.
- You may either use an existing JeS CV (no more than two pages), or give a **brief** CV account on one, but no more than two pages.

3. Project Proposal

- Proposals should be no more than **two pages** long (including references, figures and footnotes) and should be submitted in **PDF format**.
- Proposals should contain a **statement of which M2D theme(s)** the proposal is addressing and **how**.
- Proposals should provide a clear description of the proposed project, including **how it addresses the assessment criteria**, the method for how the project will be achieved and a list of the expected project outputs.

Please note that applications which do not follow the above steps will not be forwarded to the Expert Panel for review; instead applications will be returned to the applicant so that they may resubmit in another funding review round.

A wide variety of different project types is possible under this call, and we welcome creative submissions as long as the assessment criteria are met.

We strongly encourage proposals that seek to:

- Bring together researchers from different disciplines covered by the network.
- Make the work of the network more accessible to end users and stakeholders.
- Identify the current challenges of researchers and end users, which then could be addressed in follow-up studies.
- Analyse new model outputs and the generation of small quantities of new data.
- Undertake initial research on a topic relevant to the network.
- Do the ground work to develop a full research proposal, which then would be submitted to EPSRC, ESRC, NERC or AHRC at a later stage.

We may share information regarding M2D applications with our sister network **CRUISSE** and our funders **EPSRC**, **ESRC**, **AHRC** and **NERC**, unless that is the applicant requests otherwise. A preference for any specific confidentiality needs should be made when submitting the application [via email] to M2D

Please direct any questions to the network Project Manager Dr Emma Clarke
e.v.f.clarke@exeter.ac.uk.

Terms and conditions for funding

1. The project must start within three months of the date of the offer letter, and finish within six months of the project start, or by 31st Dec 2018, whichever is the sooner, unless written permission has been given to vary date of commencement of duration of project.
2. Any unspent funds at the end of the project will be reallocated to other projects.
3. Any employment or visa compliance implications are entirely the responsibility of the project leader and their institution.
4. Any funds spent must be used to support the named agreed project including any specific conditions in the offer letter, in addition to any requirements from EPSRC or HMRC.
5. Any contravention of these in spirit or letter will result in a demand for return of the funds.
6. Any research or data generated must be made available per the RCUK policies on open access.
7. Joint or partial funding of projects is permitted as long as the role of the other funding is clearly and transparently made, and funding from M2D is essential for the project.
8. Funds can be claimed in one of three ways.
 - i. Individual expenses, such as travel and subsistence, can be claimed from the M2D project manager.
 - ii. An invoice for actual expenses (including PDRA costs) incurred will be sent to the project manager at the end of project.
 - iii. In exceptional cases, it may be possible to invoice the project manager for up to 50% of the project costs at the start of the project, followed by an invoice for the balance after the end of the project.
9. You cannot claim overheads or bench fees from M2D, other than any exceptions mentioned above.
10. Please note that funding for academic staff time will only be provided from M2D funds in exceptional cases. Researcher time for PDRA is eligible for funding.
11. You must request and obtain written permission for any variation in the project.
12. It is the responsibility of the project leader to ensure that any implied offer of time or resources are approved by their appropriate institutional processes prior to commencement of the project.

Terms and conditions of reporting

In agreeing to the funding, you agree to the following reporting of the results of the project:

1. Provide M2D with a brief (200 word) description of the project, which may be used on the M2D website.
2. Provide M2D with an announcement of the funded research within one month after the start of the project.
3. Provide M2D with a completed end report proforma, at latest two months after the end of the project.
4. The end report will include mention of any papers or reports in preparation, details of to what extent the stated objectives were met, and any plans for follow-up research or dissemination activities.
5. If the end report is due before the 31st Oct 2018 then you should also provide M2D with a final report by 31st Dec 2018 that updates any progress from the end report.
6. You must acknowledge M2D funding in any publication resulting from the project.

Version history: 2017 04 28 E.Clarke. Version 6