

CALL FOR PROPOSALS...by the North West Science Review

The North West Science Review will aim to identify areas of strategic science and technological importance, for the next 20 years, which are consistent with the regional strategy for the North West. The call for proposals invites projects for funding which can help bring about this aim. In carrying out this call for proposals, the key criteria are:

- Quality of science
- Impact on the North West science base
- Impact on the future of the North West economy.

Projects could be individual pieces of scientific research, feasibility studies for future major scientific activity, or contributions to scientific infrastructure.

PURPOSE OF THE NORTH WEST SCIENCE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The Review has been established to identify suitable projects for funding to build on the excellent science base in the North West, to strengthen its scientific infrastructure and to add value to basic science and its interface with business.

This call for proposals is part of the activities of a North West Science Review Team headed by Dr Bruce Smith, which is required to report to the Minister for Science and Innovation, Lord Sainsbury by 30th September 2000.

The review will consider bids for the £25 million investment in the North West region's science base announced alongside the new UK synchrotron project on 13th March of this year. (Reference 1 in appendix)

2. General methodology

This is an open call for proposals aimed at all universities and other publicly funded institutions in the North West. Applicants should note that a small number of strategic projects will be funded by this initiative.

Projects proposed should demonstrate world-class science, and a long-term vision for science in the region while aiming to meet the future needs of the scientific community.

Private companies and individuals are not eligible to bid directly. They can join consortia where their participation adds value to the project concerned. Sponsorship or leverage from other funds in individual proposals is encouraged.

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The North West region is the geographic area covered by the Government Office for the North West. This call for proposals also recognises the importance of the Regional economy and priorities expressed in the North West regional strategy document “ England’s North West- a Strategy towards 2020 ” published by the North West Development Agency (reference 2 in appendix).

The Review Team expects bids of the highest scientific and technical merit. The proposal attributes listed in section 4 include the need to demonstrate that bids represent world-class science which is of benefit to the region. International referees will be consulted, as far as possible within the time constraints imposed on the Review Team by the reporting process.

This is an open, public call for proposals with a deadline of 28th July 2000. Proposals received after this date will not be considered.

Proposals not meeting ALL of the conditions set out in sections 6 to 11 of this document will be rejected.

The deliberations of the North West Science Review Team will be confidential and all information supplied in proposals will be treated in confidence. However, summaries of the proposals may be published in the final review report, if and when this is published.

The Review Team will decide all issues of eligibility and qualification. No correspondence will be entered into on these matters. There is no appeal on the Review Team’s decisions.

The output of this bid process will be a report to Ministers recommending projects for funding. Further qualification of bids may be sought at this time.

Further scrutiny of proposals may be necessary before funding is granted. Successful applicants will be informed of the situation as soon as possible and any further review process explained at that time.

3. Eligibility

Applications are invited from universities and other HEI’s, public sector research establishments including NHS trusts and other non-departmental public bodies, research charities and other non-profit making science establishments.

Private sector companies and businesses are not eligible to bid directly and cannot be major beneficiaries of funds from this call for proposal. They can join a consortium led by any eligible institution where it is demonstrated in the bid that they add value to the proposal.

Joint bids or consortia, where eligible institutions propose to collaborate, are permissible and welcome in cases where the logic for collaboration is compelling and adds value to the proposal. Where a consortium bid is made there must be a single lead

organisation that will take responsibility for contractual and finance matters and act as a single contact point for all correspondence.

Applications must be signed by the Director, Vice Chancellor, Principal (or equivalent) and by the most senior finance officer of the organisation or leader of a consortium bid.

4. Proposal Attributes

The Review Team is looking for bold, visionary strategic thinking from the applicants in this call for proposals. The Review Team will recommend to Ministers a small number of proposals that demonstrate significant impact.

The following list of attributes is not meant to be exclusive or comprehensive. It is however included as a guide to applicants to help them understand what the Review Team considers are important issues. However, it is not necessary for any single bid to conform to or demonstrate all these elements. The list is not in any order of priority.

- **Critical mass:** Significant size and strategic in nature to impact the region
- **Additionality:** Projects proposed should not easily be fundable by other means
- **Add value in the long term:** Look to future needs on a 20 year timescale
- **World-class science:** Demonstrate that this is a key feature of any bid
- **Feasibility:** Is the concept demonstrable now or does it need a feasibility stage
- **Unique opportunity:** Is the proposal offering a once-off or unique opportunity
- **Good fit:** With other facilities, projects or initiatives to make a greater impact
- **Creative:** is the proposal imaginative and insightful
- **Interdisciplinary:** does the project benefit more than one branch of science
- **Knowledge transfer:** an opportunity to transfer knowledge to industry
- **Out-of-the-box:** free from constraints by convention or existing structures
- **Enabling strengths and skills:** how are you maximising the impact on people
- **Youth:** understand the need to invest in young scientists to meet future demand
- **Collaboration across the region:** make best use of the “players” in the region
- **People, equipment and buildings:** balance of factors in the bid
- **Core people:** key individuals with the drive to take the bid forward
- **Out-reach:** interface with others and reach the wider community
- **Small number of critical elements:** core strategic plan, resources and outcomes
- **Training for the future:** does it have a training element.

APPLICATION CONDITIONS AND ASSESSMENT

5. Assessment criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the key criteria of:

- Quality of science

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- Impact on the North West science base
- Impact on the future of the North West economy.

Any proposals not in compliance with the conditions in this call for proposal (sections 6 to 11) will be rejected.

6. Application timetable

This call for proposals is launched on 9th June 2000. There will be no other calls for proposal against this £25 million, although further information may be sought from applicants.

9 th June	Call for proposals
28 th July	Closing date for proposals

The closing date for proposals is final. No applications will be accepted after 4pm on the 28th July.

The Review Team may call applicants to give oral presentations at a venue in the North West after the closing date. Applicants will be given as much notice as possible of such a call.

7. Delivery of proposals

All proposals must be delivered as hard copy to Chris France at the Government Office for the North West (GONW) office specified with address and contact details below.

No more and no less than **12 hard copies** of the proposal must arrive at the Government Office of the North West (contact details are at the end of this document) by 4pm on 28th July 2000.

NB: Electronic or faxed copies are not eligible.

8. Confidentiality

The proposals will be treated in confidence. However, any sensitive areas or material should be marked as such. External referees may, under confidentiality, review proposals.

Summaries of proposals may be made public but only after consultation with the applicant.

9. Financial and legal regulation

A financial strategy and outline budget must be included with the proposals. It is the responsibility of bidding parties to ensure that all relevant legal and regulatory provisions are made under UK law. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that bids are compliant with UK law and EU directives.

This call for proposals has a total budget of £25 million. There is no specific limit to the size of bid (within this budget constraint) that will be considered for funding.

10. Matching funding

Proposals that identify the possibility of matching funding of some kind, either the private, public, charitable or European are welcome. However, matching funding is not a prerequisite for success. It is also recognised that securing such funding is difficult in the timescale of this bidding process. If proposals do identify such funding contributions they must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Review Team, that any offer of extra funding is credible and realisable. In all cases where such is proposed this should form part of the financing strategy.

11. Format

There is no formal proposal format. However please note and adhere to the following. Failure to comply with these conditions will disqualify the proposal:

- There is a page limit of 10 pages A4 paper.
- All proposals will use no smaller than 10 point typeface
- Reasonable gutters and page margins are to be preserved
- Colour may be used but should not be difficult to photocopy.

Address for proposal delivery and correspondence

Mr Chris France
Government Office of the North West
5th Floor
Washington House
New Bailey Street
Manchester M3 5ER

Tel: 0161 952 4459

Faxed copies and e-mail entries are not acceptable.

APPENDIX

Members of the Review Team

Chairman: Dr Bruce Smith

Mr Mike Shields, CEO North West Development Agency
Prof. Mark Ferguson, Manchester University
Prof. Bob Cernik, CCLRC, Daresbury laboratory
Prof. John Garside, Deputy Vice Chancellor UMIST
Prof. Julia Goodfellow, Birkbeck College

Prof. John Dainton, Liverpool University
Prof. Maggie Pearson, North West NHS
Dr Anthony Wilkinson, Astra Zeneca
Dr Stuart Exell, EA Technology.

References:

1. DTI press releases

www.dti.gov.uk

2. North West Development Agency

Reference to the North West regional strategy refer to the document “England’s North West a strategy towards 2020” written by the North West Development Agency, copies of which can be found on the web at:

www.nwda.co.uk