

# NCIA Action Learning Innovation Funding Application Guidance and Selection Criteria

The National Civic Impact Accelerator (NCIA) generates intelligence on civic innovations and aims to provide universities with the framework and tools to deliver meaningful, measurable civic strategies and activities by stimulating collaboration and policy and practice innovation involving universities, local & central government, business groups, and the community sector to drive place-based transformations.

As members of the Action Learning process, you are eligible to apply for innovation funding to implement and pilot civic approaches and actions.

## Innovation Funding

The second round of funding will consist of a competitive application process where we encourage partnerships to apply as consortia for funding. We are especially interested in cross-partnership bids and supporting groups with clear ideas, a commitment to challenge, and an ability to work proactively with others.

The NCIA Innovation Funding offer includes;

- Funding of up to £15,000 (inclusive of VAT).
- Activity needs to be completed between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and should start no later than 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- Funding is only available to partnerships and organisations involved in the NCIA Action Learning Process
- Applicants will be asked to demonstrate an awareness of issues of power, diversity, and inclusion in the way they work.
- Applicants will be expected to share the learning obtained through the funding through NCIA channels to the wider sector (this may take the form of webinars, blogs or reports).

The deadline for preliminary applications is **10 May 2024**

## **Application Guidance**

### **Innovation Funding Aims and Objectives:**

The innovation funding aims to further the NCIA's vision to increase the connectivity, momentum and effectiveness of the HE sector's civic activities for local societal, economic, and environmental benefit and maximise the contribution universities can make towards addressing societal challenges and responding to policy priorities.

Some suggestions towards how the funding could be used are;

- A focus on challenges that are expressed locally to the partnership that builds new knowledge that can benefit society.
- Partnerships can apply to work as 'buddies', focusing on challenges expressed locally but are common to both partnerships, providing opportunity for a comparison of challenges and development of resources that can be used in different contexts.

- Bids that explore a wider methodology or approach. This might include the development of training and taking lessons forward.

## Application Process

The Innovation Funding application process will have two stages:

1. A short preliminary form in which we invite you to introduce your consortia and your idea for the innovation funding. **Deadline 10 May 2024**
2. Successful candidates will be invited to continue through to a lengthier application in which we would like to hear more about you and your motivations, your idea and how you might like to organise your consortia (if applying as one). **Deadline 14 June 2024**

Successful applications will be notified by 5 July 2024.

## The Award

### Funding

You can apply for a grant of between £5000 and £15,000 (Inclusive of VAT)

This must be paid into the bank account of a university involved in the NCIA Action Learning Process

### Payment Profile

Payments will be paid to the 'lead' partnership in the consortia.

Funding will be paid as a grant with 50% as an up-front payment once an application is successful and we have received a project initiation document. We envisage another payment of 50% to be made at the end of February 2025.

We may review this depending on the expenditure profile of the proposed project.

These payments will be contingent on meeting agreed reporting milestones.

These might include:

- A project initiation document
- An interim and final budget report
- Dissemination of outputs etc

The funding should cover your project costs. You may use funds to cover events costs; refreshments; UK travel; relevant professional development opportunities and creation of resources and outputs.

## Any Questions

If you have any questions about the funding, please feel free to anonymously add these to this Padlet board [National Civic Impact Accelerator Innovation Funding \(padlet.com\)](https://padlet.com/national-civic-impact-accelerator-innovation-funding) This will be open for your questions until 08/05/2024, and we will endeavour to respond to all questions within 2 working days of being posted.

## Preliminary Stage Assessment Criteria

In the preliminary application form you will be asked to provide high level detail about your partnership or consortia as well as a brief description of the idea or challenge that you would like to work on (250 words) and how you might like to approach this (250 words). We will also ask you about how you will work to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are considered in your practice (100 words).

### **Essential Criteria**

- Applicant and/or group needs to be involved in the NCIA Action Learning Process
- The proposal should be centred on positively informing and adding momentum to the civic engagement agenda in England.

### **Desired Criteria**

In the preliminary application stage, we will be looking for the following qualities:

- A clearly identified question or challenge that you would like to explore/address.
- A demonstrated understanding of the relevance of this challenge or question for the UK higher education sector.
- Clear consideration about the practical steps needed to move towards new understanding or action which is useful to the sector.
- An ability to reflect on the ethics of your approach and a commitment to issues pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- An approximation of the amount of financial support that you would like to apply for (between £5,000 and £15,000)

## **Further Application Stages**

Applicants who are successful at preliminary stage will be asked to complete a longer application form. At this second stage we will invite potential applicants to:

- Provide further detail on your partnership/consortia, your proposed project and how you might like to organise your consortia (if applying as one).
- Outline how the NCIA might be able to support you.
- Outline a budget of between £5000 and £15,000 (inc VAT) that feels considered and proportionate.
- Provide a rough timeline and outline of your time commitment to this work.
- An outline of how you may disseminate learning to other organisations and the wider sector.

Full applications will be reviewed by a panel of NCCPE staff and other organisations that represent the workstreams in the National Civic Impact Accelerator.