



UK Research and Innovation's new website – further information

What is happening to the UKRI and council websites?

Following the establishment of UKRI in April 2018, an intensive research exercise was carried out over five months across all UKRI communities to discover what our website user needs were.

This discovery exercise provided detailed evidence that UKRI needs a single, consistent website bringing together the existing websites of our nine councils. The user research found that individual users visit multiple council websites largely to perform the same tasks, and that the current 10 separate websites make it challenging for users to quickly find what they are looking for – lacking consistency in format and navigation.

The new single website is unifying all the UKRI corporate websites to deliver an efficient, informative, inspiring user experience. It will also host a 'Funding finder' – a single list of all UKRI funding opportunities and provide the starting point of the funding application 'journey'.

Won't the councils' identities be lost?

No. The new website ensures that each of UKRI's nine councils will retain their sense of individuality, reflecting their remits and work while forming part of a unified overall website for the organisation.

When will the new website be launched?

The full single site will be completed during 2021.

On 29 October we go live with the replacement for the existing UKRI website and a new single Funding finder, which will contain all funding opportunities from across all the councils. This is phase 1 of the work and the individual council websites will still exist, but they will not publish new funding opportunities.

During phase 2 we will gradually review and move content from the council websites, with them all closing during 2021 once the transition to the new site is complete.

Running the new website alongside the existing nine councils' sites as we transition content will allow us to carry out robust user testing to ensure the new site offers the best possible service to our users.



How are you developing the new site?

We are following the Government Digital Service (GDS) standards and using an agile approach to project management - researching, prototyping, testing and learning about our users' needs before we built our website.

We started by learning about the people who will use our site – our users. Our intensive research discovery exercise helped us to understand who our users are and what they need from our website, so we could build the right product

Following the completion of the prototyping, user testing and build we are now going live with the first development phase. We will continue to enhance the site based on user testing and feedback as we transition the nine councils' websites.

How much has the new website and funding finder cost?

UKRI has invested £1.4 million in the development of the new website and funding finder over the first two years of the project. The spend is monitored and approved by the Government Digital Service spend controls pipeline assessment criteria via the UKRI Portfolio Assurance Group

This is a large, complex IT and web project involving nine council sites and the old UKRI site, with over 85,000 pieces of content across the sites. The new site and funding finder will simplify and streamline content and structure, making it easier for users to find what they are looking for.

As an organisation with a total investment budget of over £9 billion, it is vital that we have an effective, consistent and user-friendly site that reflects our extensive remit and ensures we achieve quality outcomes.

Work began in 2018 with the audit and discovery research across 10 websites, conducted by Lagom Strategy, a digital service Discovery phase specialist agency.

Early prototyping started in March 2019 with internal and external engagement, one-to-one user testing to iterate, refine the concept, structure to build and design the site by March 2020. This work was completed by DXW, an independent digital agency that works with the public and third sectors.

Development and transition of UKRI.org, the first stage of the site, was completed in October 2020. Phase 2 will complete in 2021 with the review, transition, archive and closure of the nine council websites.



Procurement was through the government's Digital Marketplace, which is an online service for public sector organisations to find people and technology for digital projects. We used the Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework within the Marketplace. A full open tender was run for the two contracts (discovery, then alpha and beta).

What will the new website do that the existing websites do not?

The new website will provide clarity and consistency across UK Research and Innovation, reflecting the individual characteristics of UKRI's councils within a unified website for the organisation.

The UKRI and council sites combined have over 85,000 pieces of content. The new site will simplify and streamline content and structure, making it easier for users to find what they are looking for. The new site will meet user needs.

We have consulted with over 1,000 users in surveys, interviews and workshops and 1 to 1 testing throughout the development process. The users represent a wide range of academics in different career stages, research office personnel, business partners, policymakers, media and the general public.

A key user need was for a single Funding finder - a single place where we list all the funding opportunities that are available across all UKRI councils.

Through our research we know that users have to visit multiple council websites to get all the information they need - researchers and those looking for funding have been trawling through an average of six websites. The Funding finder will essentially make life easier for our users by bringing all the key funding information together in one place.

As well as simplifying things, the Funding finder helps us harmonise how we talk about funding. Across our 10 existing websites there's a lot of inconsistency in how we provide information for funding. User feedback shows that people feel frustrated and exasperated at this, especially delving through long bits of content only to find the funding isn't right for them. The new website and Funding finder will simplify things based around the user's needs, and what they have told us works for them.

Users' feedback:

- "Looks straightforward. Very simple"
- "The key details are here. That's really helpful!"
- "There's enough info to know if I care enough to click the link."

The unified website helps us to define our purpose and illustrate how the seven research councils, Research England and Innovate UK come together to enable us to



realise our ambition as a world-class funder, creating knowledge with impact across society and the economy

Will publishing of funding opportunities be delayed during the switchover?

No – timely publishing of funding opportunities is business-critical and given the highest priority.

Is the new Funding finder related to the new UKRI Funding Service?

The Funding finder is part of the website functionality (not the UKRI Funding Service platform).

The Funding finder will act as the front door for the new Funding Service. Initially the finder will largely link through to the existing funding systems, such as Je-S.

Is the website development part of UKRI's Reforming our Business agenda?

Yes. The website is part of our work in streamlining, simplifying and improving how we work, making it easier and simpler for researchers and innovators to interact with us.

Has the website been tested for accessibility?

Yes. It's important our website works for everyone. UKRI is committed to enabling as many people as possible access to our website. We meet the international WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard.

We have followed the Government Digital Service best practice standard for accessible user-friendly content and used an external provider to audit the site for compliance with accessibility standards, which included testing by users with access needs.

We completed two external accessibility audits with the Digital Accessibility Centre. The audits used multiple assistive technologies by users with various accessibility needs.

We publish HTML format wherever possible. Where we do use a PDF there is a specific business or user need. We are planning accessible PDF implementation which involves training the organisation on how to create accessible source documents in the first place.

Our published accessibility statement explains how accessible our website is.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

The branding and logos used on the site have been tested using www.color-blindness.com, to ensure that they are legible. Some colours in our broad palette may not be discernible from each other to those with certain forms of colour blindness, but for each piece of communication we produce using the new brand we will ensure that any colours used will not affect accessibility of the information.

Will I be able to find old content?

Yes, the old UKRI sites will be archived in The National Archives web archive. If you have bookmarks or links to one of the old sites you will either be redirected to the new website if the content is still live or to the web archive.

How can I send feedback on the new site?

We will be continuously developing and improving the site as we move into further development, so we're keen to hear from you. Details on how to send feedback are on the homepage of the new website.