



InterAct Network

Impact Acceleration Programme

2022/2023

InterAct Impact Acceleration Programme (IIAP) 2022/2023

Guidance

ABOUT INTERACT

The overall aim of the [Made Smarter Innovation challenge \(MSI\)](#) is to help UK manufacturing become more productive and competitive through the innovation and diffusion of digital technology. MSI also aims to support manufacturing achieving Net Zero ambitions by 2050. Whilst technology is important, there are many social and economic factors that will be hugely influential in achieving these aims. Consideration of these factors led to the funding for the **InterAct** Network.

InterAct is led by co-directors Prof. Jan Godsell (Loughborough University) and Prof. Jill MacBryde (Strathclyde Business School). The core research team is comprised of researchers from Loughborough, Strathclyde, and Sheffield Universities. InterAct is a £4.4 million, Made Smarter Innovation funded, Economic and Social Research Council-led network that aims to bring together economic and social scientists, UK manufacturers, policy makers and digital technology providers to address the human issues resulting from the diffusion of new technologies in industry

Our long-term vision is to build a strong, vibrant, interdisciplinary community to support UK manufacturing in the innovation and diffusion of digital technologies that will result in a stronger, more resilient, manufacturing base.

- 1. Fragmented and conflicting perspectives of the future:** How do we bring together insights from across a broad range of perspectives, **direction setting** to deliver the future we want?
- 2. Industrial relevance:** Are we helping to solve industry's 'wicked' problems and **respond to industry needs**?
- 3. Access to insights:** How do we ensure access to **actionable insights for industry**?

How will InterAct support MSI?

We hope that collaborative working, new challenges, and contexts will open up new avenues for world leading research. Looking to the future, our aspirations for InterAct is a community, with clear added value for all, where stakeholder groups want to engage and be part of InterAct.

Our vision of success is that InterAct is seen as a partner of choice – easy to work with, welcoming, and professional. Ultimately, we would like to be seen as a one-stop shop which curates existing & emerging knowledge and capabilities (research and education) and showcases leading practice. InterAct would be an example of successful interdisciplinary working to which other nations aspire.

To achieve this vision, we recognise the importance of bringing industry and academia together. Addressing not only the technology challenges, but the associated economic and social issues too. Economic and social sciences will help to ensure we assess the environment when looking to deploy digital technologies.

The InterAct project will act as a conduit to **curate**, amplify and augment insights from the **economic and social sciences** (ESS) to support the [Made Smarter Innovation challenge \(MSI\)](#) objectives to:

- **Increase UK manufacturing sector investment in industrial digitalisation R&D and increase the innovation and diffusion of Industrial Digital Technologies (IDT).** Insights from the economic and social sciences will help manufacturing firms to assess the risk, make the business case, and provide insights on the management practices that will enable successful adoption.
- **Increase cross-sector collaboration between UK manufacturing sectors to drive the creation of common digital solutions** by working with manufacturing firms to identify the underlying mechanisms and management practices within a specific solution and providing a forum for sharing those mechanisms with other sectors, to enable the sharing of leading practices.
- **Increase the number of digital technology companies providing solutions for manufacturing industries** by improving the visibility of technology providers to manufacturing companies and facilitating the relationships to understand the barriers and drivers to successful technology adoption.
- **Increase the number of collaborations between SMEs and larger, more established companies up the value chain** by facilitating the connection between SMEs and larger customers and using economic and social scientists to provide insights to mediate the relationships.
- **Increase the potential for export of UK manufacturing and digital manufacturing solutions** by understanding the economic landscape and the policy drivers that would support this ambition, in addition to the capabilities firms require to support exports.

Economic and social scientists will benefit from the creation of an inclusive community seeking innovative ways to embed their expertise more effectively within interdisciplinary research. Successful integration of ESS

with science and engineering disciplines is vital to enable the successful adoption of future digital technologies.

We aspire to embed diversity and inclusivity. **Diversity of thought** will bring benefits of multiple perspectives. **Inclusivity** (at our core) will help us to embrace and collaborate with existing research groupings, rather than compete with them. **Participation will be based on expertise**, not status, and we seek to develop people at all stages of their careers.

INTERACT'S IMPACT ACCELERATION PROGRAMME (IIAP)

Funding call 1

There are many Economic and Social Science (ESS) insights currently in existence, that are not in a form that is easily accessible to policy makers, manufacturers and Industrial Digital Technology (IDT) providers. This programme will help researchers to enhance their impact skills and provide funding to help them turn their research into more accessible outputs . An impact acceleration programme has the dual benefit of building impact capacity within the ESS community whilst making the insights more accessible to end users.

We are looking for researchers from the ESS community or other disciplines that can capture human insights into the adoption of digital technologies and accelerate the digitisation of manufacturing, You will take results from your own research and use insights (from peer reviewed research) to turn it into outputs that are more accessible to policy makers, manufacturers, and IDT providers.

We expect applicants to have rigorous and relevant research findings (not necessarily yet peer reviewed) with a potential for impactful outputs that are useful to policy makers, UK manufacturing, and industrial digital technology providers and will support these stakeholders in becoming more productive and sustainable, and competitive through innovation and diffusion of digital technology.

We are keen to hear about innovative ideas about how to use IIAP funds and resources (up to £18,000 at 100% of costs) to maximise the impact of your research outputs. This research can have been carried out with or without a manufacturer, policy maker or IDT provider partner.

- Actions identified on impact plans should be completed in a final report to us.
- Applicants should make sure their outputs are aligned to the objectives of the InterAct project, and they should demonstrate this link in their application.

InterAct's Communication and Impact Managers will support successful applicants in creating a diverse range of impact activities that will facilitate and amplify the outcomes of their research project.

We are excited about our partnership with Emerald Impact Services (EIS) who are a part of the Emerald Publishing group. All InterAct members will have access to EIS's vast library of impact resources and toolkit. Additionally, all selected candidates will attend a face-to-face impact workshop to help them with their induction on to the project.

We hope that the IIAP funding and specialist support from InterAct will support successful applicants to produce novel and practical outputs of use to audiences targeted by InterAct.

Funding Allocation

Funds will be allocated on a competitive basis, through review and assessment of proposals by a panel chaired by Professor Jan Godsell and Professor Jillian McBryde, co-directors of InterAct. An external assessor will be involved in the selection process and an EDI balance will be sought.

Individual allocations will not exceed £18,000 (100% costs). The maximum duration of the project is 12 months. There is no set minimum award, but we expect your request for funding to be proportional to the scale of your proposed outputs. **Please note: staff and new research costs are not covered.**

We anticipate that we may fund up to six proposals each year, over the course of this three-year project, benefitting policy makers, IDT providers and UK manufacturing.

Eligibility checks

All proposals will be checked to ensure compliance with the following eligibility criteria at the closing date.

- Your ESS research has rigorous and relevant research findings (not necessarily yet peer reviewed) with a potential for actionable insights useful to UK manufacturing, policy makers and industrial digital technology providers.
- Applicants provide:
 - a clear pathway to an impact plan. This plan should explain how you will deliver your outputs within 12 months of the IIAP start date.
 - Your budget section should explain how you will spend the money within the 12-month duration of the IIAP.

- Requests will only cover directly incurred costs which can be only non-staff costs (consumables, travel for meetings and events, creation of digital/printed outputs, and expenses). See eligible costs for full details.
- The funding will not cover new research.
- The call is open to any organisation that is eligible to receive UKRI funding, typically academic institutions.
- Every project shall have a named Lead University/Lead Research Organisation. This organisation may apply independently or may include other project partners in its application.
- Funding shall be awarded only to the Lead University/Lead Research Organisation. Loughborough University will contract with the Lead University/Lead Research Organisation only. Any subsequent distribution of funding to project partners shall be the responsibility of the Lead University /Lead Research Organisation.
- The award holder may include other stakeholders (project partners) in their project team but should not exceed more than three team members.
- Each project shall have a named lead. The named lead shall be employed continuously by the Lead University (i.e., their post will outlast the project). The named lead shall be considered the key contact for the award, taking responsibility for delivery, budget, and reporting. The named lead must be from the organisation that will administer the grant. The named lead will take intellectual leadership and manage the impact acceleration fund. All named investigators are responsible for ensuring that successful proposals are undertaken and completed in the manner specified.
- Early career researchers (ECRs), (including post-doctoral researchers and new/probationary lecturers) are eligible to participate and are encouraged to do so and may act in role of the named lead. Where an ECR is the primary researcher, it is requested that a senior academic is also included in the project to help oversee the project. Note no time for the senior academic will be funded. For the definition of an ECR check the eligibility section of [this webpage](#).

Eligible costs

The maximum that shall be awarded to successful applicants for any single project is up to £18,000 (funded at 100% costs excluding staff costs/time) for 12 months. The amount of funding you apply for should be reasonably correlated to the type and scale of output you intend to produce.

What is the funding intended for?

The following examples are for guidance purposes only and in no way represent an expectation or preference of what we would like you to produce.

For example, we would expect smaller outputs such as reports to be funded at the lower end of the scale, followed by outputs such as videos, interactive platforms, events, commissioned artwork, or drawnalism. Whereas outputs such as an online assessment tools or web repositories could require a higher amount of funding.

Note: Any of the above outputs listed above as examples must consider how they would generate impact relevant to the stakeholder led objectives of MSI (as explained in the section '**How will InterAct support MSI?**'). e.g., Diagnostic tools could be used by industry to bench mark their current position and future ambitions and kick start a journey towards digitalisation.

Applicants are advised that value for money is a criterion in the assessment, so should ensure that their request is appropriate for the scope, ambition and expected impact, and can viably be spent within the maximum twelve months permitted.

- Travel, accommodation, and subsistence. (Including attendance at InterAct events).
- Other directly incurred costs: project specific consumables.
- Predicted costs for any communication, knowledge exchange, public engagement or other impact activities planned throughout the project.
- Attending impact activities related to the Made Smarter Innovation (MSI) and InterAct objectives e.g., podcasts, storytelling, and events.
- All successful candidates will be required to attend one face-to-face impact workshop. The duration of this workshop will be 3-4 hours. You do not need to cost for attending this workshop as the travel, subsistence, and accommodation costs (if necessary) will be covered by InterAct.

Ineligible costs

The following may not be requested under this call:

- Associated studentships.
- Any equipment.
- Any costs for staff time.
- Costs related to teaching replacements.
- Staff costs.

Expectations:

- Provide updates on progress (if requested) and comply with mid and end project requests for reporting (both during the project and post- completion). Reporting requirements will be provided to successful teams. These shall align with UKRI templates and ResearchFish (see ResearchFish website) and include commentary on whether aims have been achieved, methods used, data produced, publications or other outputs, other outcomes, impact achieved and planned, problems encountered, and forward plans.
- Attend InterAct events, as required. This shall include presentations to the InterAct Board and Annual Conference in September 2023 (date TBC). Promote and amplify InterAct through their own networks. The [InterAct Communications Manager](#) will maintain contact with successful teams and those subscribed to receive updates to ensure that important information and announcements are disseminated widely.
- In collaboration with [InterAct's Impact Manager](#) and other members of the InterAct team, develop an impact plan and agree metrics to monitor the success of the project such as (but not limited to) the number of and type of people engaged in new networks, number of events and attendees, the number of publications and their reach, new connections made by type, and new research partnerships formed by type.
- Actions you identify on your impact plan should be completed in your final report to us by 12 months after your project starts. All successful applicants are expected to attend an in-person face to face workshop on impact before they commence their project.

Selection process and assessment criteria

There are five primary criteria against which all proposals shall be assessed. Each contains key points, as shown below. All applications shall be assessed against the same criteria, regardless of the size of request. Reviewers shall assess the size of the request solely in the Value for Money criterion. Proposals shall be scored against each of the five criteria on a scale of 0-3, as follows:

0 = sub-criteria not met

1 = sub-criteria partially met

3 = sub-criteria fully met

All eligible proposals will be assessed and ranked by panel members based on essential requirements of having rigorous and relevant research findings (not necessarily peer-reviewed at the time of application)

We are looking for applicants to take insights from their research and turn it into something that is more accessible to policy makers, manufacturers, and IDT providers. To help us understand how you intend to achieve this please set out your

pathway/s to impact. Your pathways to impact should explain the following five criteria.

1. Background: (500 words)

Key questions to address	Suggested areas to cover
Is the project based on a strong underpinning academic/knowledge base?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear explanation of how the funding will be used to increase impact of your research. • Please describe the background research and insights that will be brought to your outlined impact activities. • Note any significant impact already achieved (if applicable).

2. Project Feasibility (500 words)

Key questions to address	Suggested areas to cover
Has the overarching need for these activities been clearly demonstrated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strong evidence of market, user and/or industry demand for this project (quantify where possible). • State the key beneficiaries/users
Are the objectives, outputs and deliverables clearly articulated, and is the project management described suitable to achieve these objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a clear impact plan. State the project milestones, including appropriate stage-gates (e.g., deliverables). • Provide a statement of the project's outputs and deliverables.

3. Impact (750 words)

Key questions to address	Suggested areas to cover
Have potential impacts been clearly identified and described?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a concise statement of the economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental impacts that the project aims to achieve. • Explain why it is appropriate, timely and necessary to target these impacts through this project.
Is there a good understanding of the stakeholder (UK manufacturers, policy makers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how this project is related to existing research, competitor(s) and likely beneficiaries.

and industrial digital technology providers) landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and justify the key routes to reach these stakeholders. • Demonstrate the size of the market.
Is there a realistic path to achieve and sustain impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the process or ways through which impact will be achieved. • Make clear how the approach will be tailored to address different user groups, if applicable. • What will happen when funding ends?
Is there sufficient demonstration of how the project contributes towards InterAct's objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a statement about how your project aligns with InterAct's vision.
Does the dissemination activity demonstrate a route to engagement with external stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it clear how the activity is expected to change practice and create new impact? • Does the application detail how the impacts of the activity will be captured and monitored?

4. Value for Money (300 words)

Key questions to address	Suggested areas to cover
Is there a clear justification for the funding requested?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why your request is appropriate given your review scope, ambition etc.
Is sufficient detail provided to justify the specific resources requested?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justify the need for each key item requested (e.g., equipment, travel, consumables, accommodation, event type, design).

5. Breakdown of funding requested – Provide a breakdown of funding requested.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

In line with the UKRI's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion, InterAct expects that equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded at all levels and in all aspects of applicants' impact acceleration proposals.

We are committed to supporting the research community in diverse ways to build research careers. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working, and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from researchers who job share, have a part-time contract, need flexible working arrangements or those currently committed to other longer, large existing grants.

Application process

Applicants are invited to fill out InterAct's application form for its Impact Acceleration Programme funding.

Submissions

- To download an application pack, [visit our website](#).
- The deadline for submissions is Monday 4 July 12.00 (midday)
- Email your completed form to info@interact-hub.org : Clearly labelling the subject as IIAP Application 2022.

Enquiries

A Q&A webinar session will be held on: Friday 20 May 2022 – 13:00 – 14:00
[Register for the session here.](#)

Contact

For all enquiries about the call, please email info@interact-hub.org

Timetable

Call opens: Monday 16 May 2022

Q&A session: Friday 20 May 2022 – 13:00- 14:00

Closing time and date for applications: Monday 4 July 2022 12.00 (midday)

Funding decision: Wednesday 1 August 2022

Impact Acceleration Programme may begin: 1 September 2022 (onwards)

End date for Call 1 InterAct Impact Acceleration Programme (IIAP) 30 September 2023