

DecarboN8 EPSRC Network Plus Funding Application Guidance Rapid Response Road-space Reallocation (RRRR)

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1. Timeline

11 May 2020 Call opens

27 May 2020 4pm (GMT) closing date for Expressions of Interest

28 May 2020 Panel + invitations to full application

11 June 2020 4pm (GMT) closing date for Full Applications (may be extended)

19 June 2020 Decisions announced

2. What is DecarboN8?

DecarboN8 is an [UKRI Energy Programme](#) funded 'Network Plus', which brings together the N8 group of the most research-intensive Universities in the North (Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, York) with the Connected Places Catapult and partners from local authorities and the public, private and third sectors. Our research network combines high-level research expertise with local knowledge, networks and partnerships.

Our mission is to support the rapid decarbonisation of travel, servicing the diverse needs of the North of England. We want to build the region as a test-bed for rapid development, implementation and evaluation of solutions for the decarbonisation of transport, ambitiously conceived to address the need for systemic change. Solutions should support social acceptance and reach high societal readiness levels. This requires bringing together local authorities, businesses, innovators, community groups and academics to identify problems,

share knowledge and find funding to tackle issues both here and now and for the longer term.

DecarboN8 is unique in that it is focused on place-based decarbonisation. This means recognising that we have a huge diversity of cities, towns and rural areas that will each require different solutions. There are also different local natural assets and energy sources that might influence what works where. We want to understand when more bespoke solutions work best and when we need to work across areas to achieve economies of scale. There are real risks from piecemeal approaches to this and significant problems with “one size fits all” prescriptions. The North contains this wide mix of contexts and yet has important overlapping economic areas and freight flows. Transport for the North is the first sub-national transport body which was set up in recognition of these inter-relationships which further reinforces the North as a great place to develop this approach.

Our network is structured around [four interconnected research themes](#):

- Low Carbon Pathways
- Social Acceptance and Societal Readiness (a cross-cutting theme)
- Future Transport Fuels
- Digitisation, Demand and Infrastructure

Over 3 years, DecarboN8 will develop transport decarbonisation research and innovation in the North through an intensive series of participatory events including thematic research workshops, webinars, proposal sandpits, data workshops, innovation translation events, policy cafés, stakeholder reference groups, and academic conferences. We will fund £400k of research through open competitions to develop and demonstrate scalable transport decarbonisation solutions for the North.

3. Funding Available

This document relates to Round 2, for which a total of £21,000 (£16,800 at 80% fEC) is available. **We plan to fund 3 projects of up to £7,000 (£5600 @ 80% fEC)**

This funding is limited as it is sourced from within our existing budget, and represents an addition to the funding calls already scheduled within DecarboN8.

Given the limited funding available and the rapid response nature of the work this fund seeks to support, we will not specify a minimum or maximum duration for projects. However, all projects must be completed by no later than 31/12/2021.

This scheme will not cover local authority costs for the implementation of road-space reallocation. This funding is only for research costs related to monitoring and evaluation.

4. Research Priorities

The COVID-19 lockdown has created unprecedented conditions favourable to radical experimentation with the reallocation of road-space. Across the world, local authorities have created hundreds of miles of temporary cycle paths and footpaths, to provide key workers space to safely commute and to allow all citizens to safely exercise.^{1,2} Many places have now also indicated that a reallocation of road-space to cyclists and pedestrians will be a key part of their climate smart recovery plans.^{3,4} The UK Government has also announced support for this approach.⁵

DecarboN8 is keen to encourage and support local authorities across the North of England to experiment with such measures. To ensure this historic opportunity for data collection is not missed, we have created a new rapid response fund to support the monitoring and evaluation of road-space reallocation measures in the North of England.

We invite researchers to partner with local authorities to develop proposals. DecarboN8 will fund 3 researcher-led monitoring and evaluation projects. These will provide each project's local authority with valuable data which can be used to inform local plans for a climate smart recovery from COVID-19.

DecarboN8 welcomes expressions of interest from research organisations across the UK, and we encourage applications from Early Career Researchers. We will prioritise proposals that utilise a place-based approach: reflecting the diversity of places, people and journeys. Our focus is on developing the North of England as a learning environment for transport decarbonisation research and proposals must support this goal.

5. Definitions and Eligibility

5.1 Defining the North of England

DecarboN8 welcomes applications from researchers from across the UK; however, our focus is on developing the North of England as a learning environment for carbon and transport research and proposals must support this goal. By the North of England, we refer to the [NUTS statistical regions](#) of North West England, North East England, and Yorkshire and the Humber.

¹ International Transport Forum. 2020. *Re-spacing Our Cities For Resilience* [Online, accessed 07/05/2020]. Available from: <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/respacing-cities-resilience-covid-19.pdf>

² Cycling UK. 2020. *Safe space for social distancing: FAQ* [Online, accessed 07/05/2020]. Available at: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/safe-space-social-distancing-faq>

³ Sustrans. 2020. *Tactical urbanism during Covid-19, and beyond* [Online, accessed 07/05/2020] Available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/opinion/2020/april/tactical-urbanism-during-covid-19-and-beyond/>

⁴ Transport for Greater Manchester. 2020. *Leaders progress bold active travel plans as up to £5m of emergency funding made available as part of coronavirus recovery* [Online, accessed 07/05/2020] Available at: <https://news.tfgm.com/news/leaders-progress-bold-active-travel-plans-as-up-to-gbp-5m-of-emergency-funding-made-available-as-part-of-coronavirus-recovery>

⁵ Department for Transport. 2020. *Statutory guidance: Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19* [Online, accessed 11/05/2020] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

The local authority partner must be in the North of England. We recognise that the capacity of researchers living outside of the North of England to collect data within the North of England in the context of social distancing will be limited. Please ensure that safety and compliance with [social distancing guidelines](#) are addressed in your project design.

5.2 Who can be a Principal Investigator (PI)?

- All projects must be led by an academic at a [UKRI-registered UK Research Organisation](#)
- We encourage applications led by early career researchers (ECRs). We define an early career researcher as any academic who has been awarded a PhD but has not yet held a research grant of £100,000 (at 100% fEC) or more.
- Applications are encouraged for projects led by ECRs from groups that are under-represented in transport and climate related disciplines (i.e. women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities)
- We recognise that many ECRs are on fixed-term 'researcher' as opposed to tenured 'academic' contracts, and that this often presents a barrier to applying for grants. ECRs in this position are welcome to apply. At the full application stage, such applications must include a **departmental letter of support** from their school/faculty/institute confirming:
 - That the ECR's employment contract will outlast the period of the proposed project. Alternatively, that if the grant is awarded, the contract will be extended to cover the period of the grant.
 - That if securing the grant will take their FTE over 100%, they can be released as appropriate from their duties on their other project(s) to dedicate the time required.
 - If the organisation requires that all grants be led by a tenured PI, such applications may cost 1 hour per month for a tenured academic to act as PI and mentor to the ECR applicant. The letter of support must indicate if this arrangement applies.

5.3 Project Teams

- All projects must involve the local authority as a project partner, evidenced through a **letter of support**.
- Partnerships with businesses, NGOs and community groups are encouraged.
- Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, participatory, and collaborative proposals are welcome.
- We recognise the importance of the social sciences, arts and humanities in the development of carbon literacy, social acceptability and societal readiness for decarbonising transport. Applications from all disciplines are welcome.
- **Staff:** If you are requesting salary for a person either currently working for (or to be hired by the academic institutes of the PI/Co-I) then this person will be considered **staff** in your application. These would typically be post-docs, although salary costs for other types of project support, for example administrators, can be requested where justified.

- **Project Partners** are defined as non-academic organisations who will play a supporting role in the proposed research. This may include in-kind or cash contributions such as expertise, staff time, use of facilities, etc. Project Partners cannot receive salary and overhead funding from the grant. Travel and Subsistence costs essential to Project Partner participation in the project may be requested. **Letters of support** should be included to demonstrate Project Partner support.
- **Subcontractors:** If a non-academic organisation (or individual) will play an essential role in the project, substantial enough to require costs, they should be included as a Subcontractor. Subcontractors must be engaged in line with the tendering thresholds and processes of the lead organisation. The lead organisation is responsible for putting plans in place to manage any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest.

6. Eligible Costs

We encourage applicants to contact their university/faculty research office as early as possible for support with costing. Salary costing in particular is not straightforward, so to ensure all your costs are properly covered, please take a moment to email your administrative colleagues and inform them of your intention to submit an application to this scheme.

Funding is offered at 80% full economic cost (fEC) and may be used to cover any research related activity. This fund is to cover the research costs of monitoring and evaluation – not the local authority's costs for implementing road-space reallocation measures.

Indexation should not be included in the costing, as this will be applied upon award. There is no limit to project duration, but all projects must be completed by 31/12/2021. The following cost categories are eligible:

Directly Allocated

- Investigators (PI and Co-Is)
- 1 hour per month 'Principle Investigator' time for supervision of ECR (if required)
- Estates costs
- Other Directly Allocated (i.e. infrastructure technicians)
- Indirect costs

Directly Incurred

- Staff (i.e. researchers, administrators)
- Travel and subsistence
- Consumables
- Other (i.e. equipment under £10,000; subcontracts; fees)

What is not eligible?

- Local authority costs for the implementation of road-space reallocation (this funding is only for research costs – i.e. monitoring and evaluation)

- Projects that are not led by a [UK Research Organisation](#)
- Activities that contain no element of new research
- Fees for individuals to undertake university undergraduate or postgraduate courses
- Capital or infrastructure-led projects
- Publication costs for peer review journal articles and peer reviewed conference papers

Further requirements

- You must be willing to contribute to the overall aims of DecarboN8, disseminating your findings via our [project website](#) and at our network events, as well as through other appropriate means, and engaging in building the DecarboN8 ethos into your project.
- Applicants should declare any links they have with the DecarboN8 [management group](#) or [advisory board](#).
- **Collaboration Agreements:** We require agreements to be made on GDPR compliant policies and Data Processing Agreements between the lead institution and their collaborators. If these cannot be agreed within a reasonable timeframe, we reserve the right to cease the contract process and offer the funds to another applicant.
- Successful applicants will be required to participate in 3 webinars relating to the projects funded by this scheme. 1 where they will present and receive supportive feedback on their project, and 2 where they will participate and provide supportive feedback to the PIs of the other projects.
- Successful applicants will be required to submit a final report within one month of their grant ending and a final statement of expenditure within three months of their grant ending.

7. Assessment

All our panellists will undergo unconscious bias training before reviewing the proposals. To go one step further, we use a **double-blind peer review** process for evaluating DecarboN8 funding applications.

This is designed to eliminate bias from the selection process as far as possible, and to ensure that applications from early career researchers and academics from underrepresented groups are evaluated purely based on the research proposed.

In support of this, we ask you to avoid using researchers' names, job titles, or other possible individual identifiers in the anonymous double-blind review sections of the application pack. We also ask that you avoid the use of gendered pronouns (i.e. she/he, her/him, her/his) and used they/them/their instead (regardless of the individual's actual gender) to reduce, as far as possible, the possibility of gender bias.

For both the **expression of interest** and **full application** stage, submissions will be assessed as follows:

Stage 1: Eligibility check

The Network Coordinator will perform an initial review of the submissions against the eligibility criteria e.g. correct completion of the form, focus on the North of England, and applicant eligibility. The Network Coordinator will remove the first and last (non-anonymous) sections of the application pack, and will remove any remaining individual identifiers before sharing the anonymous sections with the panel.

Stage 2: Blind Peer Review of eligible applications

Reviewers will be members of the [DecarboN8 Management Group](#). All reviewers will declare any conflicts of interest up front, and will only be assigned to review applications that they can judge impartially.

Applications will be assessed on the following:

- The extent and quality of the road-space reallocation measures to be implemented by the local authority.
- Scientific quality of the proposed research / monitoring / evaluation project.
- Novelty, ambition, and value for money.
- Alignment with the mission of the DecarboN8 Network, and the research priorities outlined in section 4 above.
- Demonstrable support for [social acceptance and societal readiness](#)
- Evidence of the proposed role of road-space reallocation in the local authority's plan for a climate-smart recovery from COVID-19.

Review Criteria

Fit (Primary)

- How well does the project align with the goals of the DecarboN8 network?
- How does the proposal advance decarbonisation of transport in the North?
- How extensive are the planned road-space reallocation measures?

Quality (Primary)

- How likely is the method to capture the impacts of the road-space reallocation?

Impact, Importance and Engagement (Secondary)

- Are the methods proposed innovative and/or rapidly scalable to other places?
- Are the (potential) beneficiaries outlined clearly, and is there a clear plan for how impact to beneficiaries can be realised?
- Is an appropriate engagement strategy clearly outlined?

Resources and Management (Secondary)

- Do the resources requested seem appropriate for the project?
- Is the planning/management structure sufficient/appropriate for the proposed work?

- Is there an appreciation of the risk associated with the project and a plan to minimise and manage risk?

Applicants will be informed of the outcome by no later than **Friday 19 June 2020**. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

DecarboN8 is committed to fostering and strengthening equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). To pursue this goal in a strategic way, we need to monitor, evaluate and report on our progress. To support this, we have created an online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring survey, which forms part of this application. Completing this survey is optional but encouraged.

The information you provide will be strictly confidential. Individuals will not be identified; data will only be analysed and reported at aggregated levels and individual data will not be made available to anyone involved in the selection process. Only the DecarboN8 Network Administration Assistant will access the individual level data.

In order to delete your data we will need your randomly generated **receipt number**, so please make a note of this, even if you choose not to include it in your application form. You can ask us to delete your data at any time by emailing your receipt number to DecarboN8@leeds.ac.uk.

The process for how this data will be used is as follows:

1. **Application Stage:** During the call period, the DecarboN8 Network Administration Assistant will monitor this data and use it to make strategic decisions about where to advertise the call, in order to encourage underrepresented groups to apply.
2. **Award Stage:** After the awards have been accepted by successful applicants, the DecarboN8 Network Administration Assistant use the receipt number (where provided) to produce an aggregated report of the diversity of the pool of award holders. This report will be shared with the DecarboN8 Management Group and Advisory Board, and our funder (EPSRC). Individual level data will not be included in this report.

Who should complete the EDI survey?

The **lead applicant** should complete this survey with their own details. In some cases, the lead applicant is not the PI, because they are a non-tenured early career researcher (ECR), and the PI is their mentor. In this case, the **lead applicant (i.e. the ECR)** should be the one to complete this survey about themselves.

Lead applicants should complete the survey **in private** in order to ensure confidentiality, even if completing the application collaboratively.

Why these characteristics?

[Our funder](#) currently gathers data on four protected characteristics:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity

We are collecting data on these characteristics in order to contextualise our progress against UKRI as a national benchmark.

We have also included questions to monitor these additional characteristics, with view to fostering greater equality, diversity and inclusion:

- Caring responsibilities
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Marital status

The aim of collecting this data is to help drive a strategic approach to maximising the diversity and inclusivity of the DecarboN8 Research Network. If there is anything we can do to make our funding and network more inclusive, please [let us know](#).

9. FAQ and Contact Us

We will be publishing (anonymised) answers to all questions applicants ask us on our [website](#). If you have a question, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing DecarboN8@leeds.ac.uk.

10. Applicant Checklist

Read the guidance notes carefully to ensure that your proposal is eligible for DecarboN8 grant and that you have completed the application form correctly. If you are submitting your authorised application as a PDF, please also include a completed WORD version in your submission.

Application form completed	
Application authorised by applicant's department (Head of School / Research Office)	
Letter of Support from the Local Authority partner	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) monitoring online form completed*	

* This is optional, is stored separately from your application, and will not be made available anyone involved in the selection process