ESRC Impact Acceleration Account – User Engagement Fund Applicant Guidance

1. **Background**

1.1 The Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Account (ESRC IAA) was awarded to the University of Glasgow (UoG) to support the generation and development of non-academic impact from social sciences research. The User Engagement Fund is one of 3 competitive schemes running as a part of the ESRC-funded IAA at the University.

1.2 The User Engagement Fund has been established in recognition of the idea that high levels of user engagement lead to more productive collaboration and effective, sustainable outcomes for academic and non-academic partners. The User Engagement Fund therefore supports early stage engagement or scoping activities with new or existing user-partners to co-design/co-develop projects with clear impact potential. Although projects may have a research dimension, the ultimate aim of projects should be to use existing or emerging research with users for impact. The scheme may also support events or activities designed to identify suitable prospective partners.

1.3 If successful, applicants would be expected to apply to one of the other two ESRC IAA schemes before 2018.

1.4 The scheme supports projects with the potential for all types of non-academic impact across all sectors.

1.5 The scheme will invite further applications in line with CoSS strategic requirements and available funds. Deadlines for all IAA schemes are available on the University webpages.

1.6 Guidance is provided within this document, but informal advice can and should be sought from the ESRC IAA Administrator, Mr Bill White (William.White@glasgow.ac.uk).

2. **Eligibility**

2.1 The scheme is open to all academic staff from across the University of Glasgow, provided the research underpinning the activities proposed falls under the remit of the ESRC. Details of the breadth of disciplines eligible are available via the ESRC website. If your work falls at the borders between the ESRC’s remit and that of another research council, please contact ESRC IAA Administrator, Mr Bill White (William.White@glasgow.ac.uk), to discuss your eligibility.

2.2 Interdisciplinary projects with a major social science component are also eligible for funding.
2.3 Collaborative projects with other HEIs are welcome but University of Glasgow ESRC IAA funds cannot directly fund the activity of academic colleagues outside of this institution. If collaborative projects are proposed with the University of Edinburgh, joint funding with the UoE ESRC IAA may be possible; applicants should discuss this with the ESRC IAA Administrator, Mr Bill White (William.White@glasgow.ac.uk).

2.4 In the case of proposals linked to live RCUK funded research, there is an expectation that grant awards will include provision for KE activity through the pathways to impact scheme. Applicants for funding from the IAA based on such projects will therefore have to demonstrate that work they are proposing to undertake using IAA funding is beyond the scope anticipated at the time the original research proposal was submitted.

2.5 Projects are normally expected to cost up to a maximum of £3000 and to last for up to a maximum of 9 months, although both upper limits may be reassessed at the discretion of the ESRC IAA Panel (if partners are predominantly based overseas, for example).

2.6 Expenses for items such as travel, accommodation, subsistence, consumables, events etc. are eligible for inclusion in IAA budgets, and should be appropriately justified in your application.

2.7 Moderate costs for research assistance are eligible for inclusion where it can be demonstrated that the activity directly supports the project, although the upper limit for this stream implies that very limited staff resource can realistically be included. For further advice about the costs and constraints associated with the inclusion of research assistance, please contact the ESRC IAA Administrator, Mr Bill White (William.White@glasgow.ac.uk).

2.8 Award recipients may not hold more than one User Engagement Fund grant concurrently. Unsuccessful projects may only be resubmitted where this is invited by the Panel.

3. Ineligible costs, activities and applicants

3.1 Post-graduate researchers are not eligible to apply to the IAA directly, but may be funded as research assistants (see 2.7 above).

3.2 The IAA is not intended to fund:

- Direct buy-out of time (salary costs) for existing academic or professional services staff
- Estates and indirect costs
- Attendance at academic conferences or networking events
- PhD fees
- Publisher costs associated with Open Access
- The preparation of research grant applications
- Activities already covered by prior ESRC awards
- Projects with limited potential for knowledge-exchange or impact or likely to achieve primarily academic impact.

4. How to apply

4.1 The application form for the User Engagement Fund can be downloaded from the same location as this guidance note.
4.2 It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to ensure that all proposed activities are in accordance with the University’s Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for Research.

4.3 Application forms should be submitted electronically to <socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk>.

4.4 All applications are considered in the first instance by the ESRC IAA Panel, comprising:

- Chair – Professor Jude Robinson, Deputy Head, College of Social Sciences
- Bonnie Dean, VP Corporate Engagement & Innovation
- Mark Mortimer, Executive Director Research & Innovation
- Professor Sally Wyke, Dean of Research, College of Social Sciences
- Professor Nick Watson, School Research Director, School of Social & Political Sciences
- Professor George Pavlakos, School of Law
- Professor Herve Moulin, School Research Director, Adam Smith Business School
- Dr Catherine Dodds, School Research Director, School of Interdisciplinary Studies
- Professor Mike Osborne, School Research Director, School of Education
- Dr Cassy Rutherford, Evidence and Learning Officer, Robertson Trust

4.5 Applicants will normally be notified of the decision within 10 working days.

4.6 Decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

5. **Assessment Criteria**

5.1 Applications will first be assessed for eligibility, and then considered according to the following criteria:

- The quality of the underpinning research and its potential for generating impact
- Potential to increase take-up of research by users
- The potential to secure or leverage additional funding
- Value for money and effective mitigation of risk
- Evidence of sustainability and network/relationship building capacity
- A clear explanation of how resources will be used to increase impact of research
- Projects with opportunities for capacity building (e.g. including ECRs or PGRs in project teams)
- Feedback and evidence of commitment from public, private or third sector partners
- Clear evaluation plans and ability to capture and demonstrate impact
- Fit with School and College research and KE priorities

6. **Reporting**

6.1 Award recipients will be required to submit a report detailing expenditure, use and outcomes (for recipients and users) within 4 weeks of the conclusion of the project.

6.2 Additional audit may be conducted at further intervals after the conclusion of projects to track impact leverage over time.
6.3 All reporting requirements will be confirmed on award of funding.