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XR Stories (2019/20)

Small Collaborative R&D Projects (Call 1 - June 2019) GUIDANCE NOTES v1.0

N.B. Please ensure you are using the Guidance notes associated with your specific call

PART 1 : General Background to the Scheme

Details in brief

- **Range of award size:** £5,000 - 30,000
- **Duration of the projects:** Maximum of 6 months (01 October 2019 is latest start date; 31 March 2020 is latest end date)
- **Deadline for applications:** 12 noon, Wednesday 31 July 2019
- **Overarching aim of the fund:** The purpose of this funding call is to enable and support investigative R&D projects led by either academic or sector partners.
- **Links:** <https://xrstories.co.uk/funding/apply-for-funding/>

XR Stories is one of nine UK Creative Industries Cluster Partnerships supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the Industrial Strategy. It is led by The University of York in partnership with the British Film Institute and Screen Yorkshire – along with a wide range of creative and cultural industries partners and Yorkshire Universities. XR Stories has the overarching ambition to make the Yorkshire and Humber region the UK's centre of expertise in digital screen storytelling. It has been established to provide research and development funding to enable our industry partners to collaborate with academic institutions in rising to the challenge and opportunity offered by immersive and interactive technology for digital storytelling.

What is this funding for?

It is for small co-created collaborative R&D projects between industry and university partners to gain access to awards of £5k-£30k to explore, scope, develop or investigate the application of immersive/interactive technology for storytelling around XR Stories' six core challenge areas:

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- Narrative experiences for the second screen, complementing major film or TV productions or gaming applications.
- Storytelling in VR, as an example of second screen experiences that have the capacity to develop into primary experiences.
- The elaboration of second screen experiences into coherent interactive and immersive storyworlds.
- The development of interactive and responsive narratives, such as TV programmes that adapt to the contexts in which they are experienced.
- The development of dedicated tools for creating, producing and delivering such narrative experiences.
- The use of big data analytics and artificial intelligence to shape narrative content creation and delivery.

A typical project might involve a Yorkshire or Humber region SME working with an academic researcher to develop a new VR gaming experience based on some existing content they have developed. The SME would bring the story idea, and existing media, and the researcher might bring the VR development skills to enable traditional screen based materials to be translated into an immersive/interactive context, with a view to developing the in-house skills of the company. A games company might explore how user/audience-interaction can be linked to character development and narrative choice in partnership with a computer scientist, an actor and a writer. A researcher in sound design might explore production workflows as translated from existing screen based content through to new immersive VR storyworlds. A film production company might explore how augmented reality technology could be used to develop a marketing strategy for a new release. A cultural organisation might work with a researcher to explore how technology can help to tell stories in relation to a collection or exhibition.

Applying to this fund does not preclude you from applying to a larger XR Stories R&D fund to develop exploration of the same R&D challenge at a later date. *However, the selection panel will take into account previous funding on a project and the success of the original project outputs as part of any later application and assessment process.*

SMEs and micro-businesses can apply for any eligible R&D costs at 100% of value (e.g. staff; staff time; running feasibility studies or audience development exercises; development costs; specific R&D equipment/facilities). Academic institutions (other than the University of York) or independent research organisations can apply for any eligible R&D costs (similar to the SME examples), valued at 100% full economic cost (FEC), and XR Stories will pay 80% of FEC. It is

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expected that the host institution will contribute the additional 20%, as would be the case for any other UKRI funding. Note that this 20% FEC does not contribute to any in-kind support.

What is this funding *not* for?

- Projects based on an application from a single organisation or individual.
- Commissioning or planning for the commission of new film/TV productions or games.
- Projects that do not include clear research and development goals.
- Projects that do not have the potential for the economic growth of the company or companies involved.
- Projects that do not have a benefit to the Yorkshire and Humber creative screen industries cluster region.
- The purchase of standard personal computers, including laptops, or standard software, however, the purchase of specialist equipment required to fulfill the R&D challenge will be considered.
- Travel, subsistence or costs associated with attendance of externally arranged conferences (e.g. attendance at trade shows), although other travel costs within the UK, are eligible if directly associated with the R&D Challenge.
- Payment of student stipends, internships or placements or course bursaries (there are other funding routes available for these activities).

What makes a project eligible for funding?

To be eligible for funding and move to review and assessment a project must first meet all of the following core XR Stories eligibility criteria:

- Storytelling: must be at the centre of the planned R&D project.
- Collaboration: between XR Stories partners to include at least one industry and one academic partner.
- Co-created R&D: developed by the project partners with the industry partner being the primary beneficiary of the R&D activity.
- Co-funding: partners must support the project through their own cash/in-kind support to unlock the funding that XR Stories holds.
- Shared IP: a model that is flexible and supportive with the maximum opportunity for successful leverage of any IP created.

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How will the application be assessed? What are your funding criteria?

Your application will be sent to two independent reviewers selected from our College of Experts made up of individuals from academic, research and industry backgrounds. Once all proposals have been submitted, applications will be judged by a Selection Panel and ranked, and recommendations for funding passed to the XR Stories Executive Board for final approval.

XR Stories Executive Board members

- Professor Damian Murphy (Director)
- Dr. Kate O'Connor (Industry Partnerships; Co-Director)
- Professor Marian Ursu (R&D Lead; Co-Investigator)
- Professor Andrew Higson (Academic Partnerships and Skills; Co-Director)
- Harriet Finney (National Sector Strategy; Co-Director)
- Hugo Heppell (Regional Industry; Co-Director)
- Emma Brown (Programme Manager)

Main assessment criteria

- R&D challenge, potential, and fit to aims of XR Stories
- Routes to market and economic growth
- Impact (e.g. social, cultural, academic)
- Project management (team, workplan, outputs etc.)
- Co-funding (Cash/In-Kind) and justification of finances

Am I eligible to apply?

We will ask you to complete and sign a formal eligibility check in addition to the assessment of the main project, and any businesses will be asked to supply baseline information about the company:

- Any businesses attached to the project who wish to draw down funding from XR Stories must be no larger than a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) - definitions [here](#).
- Any businesses attached to the project who wish to draw down funding from XR Stories must be eligible for receiving funding under the European Commission's State Aid Regulations under the *De Minimis* State Aid regulation.

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- The lead partner for the bid **MUST** be active in the screen industry sector (film, TV games and related media industries) in the Yorkshire and Humber region, working with researchers in a related field from a University in the Yorkshire or Humber region.
- There **MUST** be evidence of collaboration between University researchers and the creative/cultural industries with a focus on storytelling and the technologies and practices of the screen industries (film, TV, games and related media).
- You **MUST** be willing and able to contribute some match funding to the project. This could be an 'in-kind' contribution e.g. staff time contributed or access to equipment, and should be evidenced across the duration of your project.
- You **MUST** be willing to engage in reporting the project outputs, both qualitative and quantitative and share and disseminate them widely (within the agreed IP framework), and on an ongoing basis beyond your project end date according to the requirements of XR Stories.
- Your project **MUST** contribute to one or more of XR Stories' six R&D challenges.

Do I get help in preparing the application?

There are a few ways to get help in the preparation of the application.

- Frequently Asked Questions and answers will be found in the funding area of the XR Stories website: <https://xrstories.co.uk/funding/>.
- You can email us for more information or to discuss an idea, and one of our R&D team will be in touch - please contact enquiries@xrstories.co.uk in the first instance.
- We will hold a number of workshops during June/July when members of the team will be on hand to explain the funding calls and answer questions directly.

What's expected in terms of outputs/reporting?

All projects need to report back on qualitative and quantitative outcomes from the project. This will include direct reporting against the outputs promised in the application, together with those arising indirectly from these outputs; financial accounting; evidencing of cash/in-kind leverage; updates on baseline business information; participation in post-funding interview and debrief. Reporting will take place once the project has been completed, and will also be ongoing, in a more light touch mode, for the duration of XR Stories.

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Should I consider IP or contracts at this stage?

The contractual framework for collaboration and IP including State Aid compliance and research ethics - please see Part 3 - should be considered at this stage. Management and agreement of IP arising from this project is one of the core project eligibility criteria and so must be addressed. Should your R&D proposal be selected we will work with you to complete contractual arrangements including IP, State Aid, ethical considerations etc.

Timescales

Timescales/deadlines	Activity
Monday 03 June 2019	Call opens.
June-July 2019	Briefing workshops to be held.
12 noon, Wednesday 31 July 2019	Deadline for applications.
August 2019	Initial eligibility check and reviewing process. Selection panel meeting and Executive Board approval.
September 2019	Outcomes to be announced and post-award eligibility form to be completed for successful projects.
September 2019	Award allocation and feedback sent out to applicants.
Tuesday 01 October 2019	Latest project start date.
Monday 31 March 2020	Latest project end date and by when all funding must be spent, or returned.
Monday 28 April 2020	Final report date.

PART 2 Filling in the Application Form

a. Project title

What's it called? Make your title memorable and descriptive, try to avoid acronyms.

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b. Describe your project

Describe it as you would to a friend, telling us which of the 6 R&D Challenges you will be addressing (it can be more than 1) and how. (max 250 words). We will be using this text to promote successful projects on our web site and other publications so it should be clear and concise.

c. Amount requested from this fund

Anything between £5k and £30k. £30k is a limit, not a target, and we will be looking at value for money. The amount requested from XR Stories should contribute to the costs of all partners on the project, both academic and industry. The total project value, once cash/in-kind support from all partners has been included, will be greater than the actual amount requested from XR Stories.

d. Start and end date of project

Remember the end date of the project is not the same as the final reporting date. Please refer to the timetable for the application procedure in PART 1 that gives limits on project start and end dates.

e. Applicant details

We are asking for this information for the purposes of managing and administering the grant, and to enable your participation in the XR Stories project. The University of York takes its obligations under GDPR seriously. More information about your rights and our responsibilities can be found here <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/>.

f. Project description (max 2000 words, or 2 sides of A4)

Tell us about your planned project, including information about:

1. The targeted R&D Challenge and fit to XR Stories, with references to the skills and expertise available in the company, the state of the art in industry and, if possible, in research (indicative words: 500)
2. Why your collaboration is important and necessary to tackle this R&D challenge (500 words)
3. What routes to market you have identified for outputs from this R&D (250 words)

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4. What potential you see for economic growth based on this R&D investment (250 words)
5. The impact that the project outputs will contribute more widely (500 words)
6. If helpful, please feel free to include a diagrammatic work plan in this section

g. Tell us about your objectives and outputs in this table:

Work Package Number	Objective	Output(s)	Owner and role
3.6, 3.7, 5.2	To inform the sector of the R&D outputs	Workshops, seminars, Youtube film	Team Member Name

Work package numbers should align with those used in your diagrammatic work plan (if you are using one). Objectives must define desired benefits, outcomes or performance improvements that you expect from the project. What you need to measure on your project will naturally fall out of the definition of good objectives. They should not describe what you plan to do, how you plan to do it, or what you plan to produce. Outputs are the tangible things that the project will produce to enable the objectives to be achieved. Outputs are only produced in order to enable achievement of the objectives. Outputs can also be called ‘deliverables’ and ‘products’.

h. Finance and budget breakdown including in kind/match

We have tried to keep this as simple as possible, but we need to know how much you want from us, how much cash or in-kind contribution you are going to make and how much the total value of the project is going to be. Here is a worked example of the sort of thing we are after:

Category	Amount of in kind or match contribution	Amount requested from XR Stories	Subtotal in kind or match contribution	Subtotal requested from XR Stories
(1) Staff (day rate and number of days)	SME Team Member 1, 2 days @ £X per day	SME Team Member 1, 6 days @ £X per day	£800.00 (for example...)	£2,400.00 (for example...)
	SME Team Member 2, 1 day @ £X per day	SME Team Member 2, 1 day @ £X per day	£500.00	£500.00
	Academic Team Member 3, from Uni of Yorkshire	Academic Team Member 3, from Uni of Yorkshire	£400.00	£320.00

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	1 day@ £X @ 80% FEC	1 day@ £X @ 80% FEC		
(2) Overheads	SME - we are seeking advice on this; HEI - Normal UKRI FEC rates should be applied and listed as 'estates' and 'indirect'	SME - we are seeking advice on this; HEI - Normal UKRI FEC rates should be applied and listed as 'estates' and 'indirect'	£0.00	£0.00
(3) Consumables	Use of Immersive Studio, 1 day @ £X per day	Hire of Immersive Studio, 1 day @ £X per day	£500.00	£500.00
(4) Travel & subsistence	-	Participation in Project Workshop (all items to be detailed)	-	£500.00
Totals:			£2,200.00	£4,220.00
Total Value of project:			£6,420.00	

- (1) We need to know the amount of time a staff member will spend and how much they cost and this will need to be accounted for as evidenced as part of your reporting.
Please note that XR Stories (as it is funded by AHRC, part of UKRI) will only fund 80% FEC for academic staff and/or HEI Costs.
- (2) For some industry sector employees, overheads (i.e. additional costs to cover HR function, utilities, rent etc) will be already included in your day rate. Sometimes it can be expressed as an additional % of salary (and other) costs. Please be explicit if overheads are included in day rates or not.
- (3) Travel should be costed with value for money in mind. Travel on public transport should be in standard class, and overnight accommodation should be no more than £100 per night for a B&B. Reasonable expenses for meals when away from your home/work base and catering will be allowable.

i. Signatures/Roles/Date

Please note that academic staff should follow the sign off procedures of their host institutions.

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PART 3 - What am I expected to do next if my project is approved by the panel?

DIAGRAMMATIC WORK PLAN

If you did not include such a work plan in your initial application please do so here. Your work plan should describe the key activities involved in your project, when they will happen, and who will lead or work on each bit. We basically need to have a simple work plan to help in the overall planning of activities across all funded projects.

RISK REGISTER

We want to keep the risk register simple, so something like the example below would be adequate. We aren't expecting to receive many high risk projects but we need from a governance point of view to be assured that any risks are being acknowledged and dealt with appropriately.

ID	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Severity	Owner	Mitigation	Status
1.	Assets may not be produced in time to meet schedules	low	high	medium	Jo Blogs	Close monitoring of asset production JB to attend weekly meetings	Open 1/5/19

COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

In this section we are looking for agreement on a number of compliance and assurance issues. We have kept it simple because we think that it may be a straightforward process for many of you. However, if you have issues with complying with any of the aspects of the project, then all is not lost. Please contact us so we can try and resolve the problems; in that scenario these are prompts for more detailed conversations.

a. Intellectual Property (IP)

xR Stories, under the auspices of the University of York, will enter into collaboration agreements for individual R&D projects. These agreements will deal with issues such as intellectual property rights, publication rights, and liability, and also incorporate the AHRC's funding conditions.

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Access Rights to Pre-existing IP

Each project partner will make available its pre-existing (“Background”) IP to the other parties if needed by them to perform the project. This access will be made on a free and non- exclusive basis to support the project, and it is expected that this access would automatically end on completion of the project. Post-project access to background IP for commercial purposes would be negotiated on a case-by- case basis.

Ownership of New IP

A number of options are available for the ownership and exploitation of IP created during the course of the project (‘Foreground’ IP), and template contracts will be provided to all partners after discussion about the ownership and exploitation potential for newly created IP. In all cases the assumption will be to grant the project partner an option to negotiate an exclusive, royalty-bearing licence to use that IP for commercial purposes, though this licence may be limited by territory, field, or time as appropriate in the circumstances. In a situation where the University of York or other HEI assigns ownership of new IP, it would reserve a licence to be able to continue to use that IP for the non-commercial purposes of teaching and further research. All IP generated by the University must be managed for the benefit of the public, in accordance with its charitable objectives, and would work with all company partners to ensure active commercialisation of IP within a reasonable timescale. Reporting on progress of commercialisation will be a condition of the grant, in order to satisfy funder reporting requirements.

Exploitation of New IP

The University of York has support mechanisms in place so that IP is managed for the public benefit in accordance with its charitable objectives. The University’s Research and Enterprise Directorate includes technology transfer experts in the Business Development and IP and Legal teams. They assist in the identification, protection, management, and exploitation of IP. For Foreground IP developed and owned by the University of York (or other HEI), commercial exploitation may include licensing to existing companies or creation of a spin-out company. Where appropriate, non-commercial exploitation could include open source licensing of computer software and licensing of other copyright works through Creative Commons licences. In the case of Foreground IP licensed to a company, XR Stories would require as a condition of that license that the company uses all reasonable effort to actively commercialise that IP within a reasonable time scale and report on its progress to the XR Stories.

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Studentships

Where XR Stories funds a student to work with a company (as part of an internship, project placement, MSc by Research or PhD) the resulting IP shall be owned by the host University if funded directly and only by that institution, by the company if funded directly and only by that company, or is shared if a co-funding model is adopted.

b. Ethical Issues

Projects are funded on the understanding that all applicants and co-applicants are familiar with their host institution's Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance, and that ethical considerations are taken into account in the project design. The responsibility for identifying and responding to ethical considerations, referring them for review, and securing approval before the research commences lies with the project lead. Should an applicant have any concerns about the ethical dimension of their proposed research they may refer it to the XR Stories team *prior to formal submission*, to help with ethics review. Please do not take risks with ethics!

c. State aid compliance

You are being offered assistance under the European Commission's State Aid Regulations. This allows a company to receive up to €200,000 (at applicable exchange rate) of *De Minimis* state aid over a rolling three-year period. To confirm that you are able to receive this assistance you must declare the full amount of *De Minimis* aid you have already received over the last 3 fiscal years. Potentially any assistance from a public body might be aid. Should you have any doubts on this matter, please contact the organisation from which the assistance was received. These types of aid may have been provided under *De Minimis* (as *De Minimis aid*) or under another State Aid regulation. If they are unable to say or there is any uncertainty, assume that it was *De Minimis* aid unless its value exceeded €200,000 in which case it cannot have been *De Minimis*. Note that any *De Minimis* state aid awarded to you under this project will have to be declared if you apply for other sources of public funding in the future.

d. KPIs

XR Stories is a project in itself and has a number of KPIs against which it needs to report to our funder, the AHRC. We will expect applicants in their final report to link their outputs to our KPIs. A full list of relevant XR Stories KPIs that apply to your project that you will be expected to report against will be made available to successful applicants at the beginning of their projects.