

PRIMaRE Early Career Researcher Small Research Projects (ECR-SRPs): Call for Applications

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Background

The Partnership for Research in Marine Renewable Energy (PRIMaRE) is a consortium of world-class research institutions based in the west, south, and south west of the UK. PRIMaRE brings together a Network of Excellence of Marine Renewable Energy (MRE) experts across academia, research and industry who undertake research and development to address challenges facing the MRE sector at the regional, national and international level.

In July 2017, PRIMaRE received a network grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to enhance its work through events, workshops and a summer school for those seeking to expand their knowledge in the MRE sector. As part of the network grant, funding for small research projects is available.

PRIMaRE is pleased to invite proposals for Early Career Researcher Small Research Projects (ECR-SRPs). **The maximum award size will be £5,000 (direct costs only) and funded at 80% FEC by PRIMaRE.** This note gives the context of the call and sets out the information the applicant should provide in the proposal.

PRIMaRE Funding Opportunities: Small Research Projects (SRPs)

PRIMaRE is inviting applications for ECR-SRPs from early career researchers (ECRs) within PRIMaRE partner institutions ([PRIMaRE Partners](#) and [Associate Partners](#)). The fund is designed to be a flexible research fund for ECRs to enable small activities that either support and develop your existing research activities, or develop your skills further. Research activities should be aligned with the priority areas identified by PRIMaRE, further details of which can be found on our website [HERE](#), and all aspects of marine renewable energy (MRE) are eligible, including:

- Materials, Manufacture & Structural Design
- Fluid Dynamics & Hydrodynamics
- Survivability & Reliability
- Environmental Resources
- Impacts on Environment & Ecosystems
- Power Conversion & Control
- Infrastructure & Grid Connection

- Marine Operations & Maritime Safety
- Marine Planning & Governance

Multi-disciplinary or multi-sectoral proposals are encouraged, as are collaborative projects with industry.

Timeline

The deadline for submission of applications to this ECR-SRP call is noon on Friday 20th November 2020. All applications will be peer reviewed by researchers from PRIMaRE partner institutions. Funding decisions will be made within 4 weeks of the proposal deadline with **award announcements made on or before Friday 18th December 2020.**

The proposed activity for successful awards and the subsequent funding claim **must both be completed by August 31st 2021.**

Scheme Objectives

The overall aim of this ECR-SRP scheme is to assist with and facilitate the development of ECRs within the PRIMaRE network. The objectives of the scheme are:

- to facilitate access to infrastructure to UK researchers and industry by removing financial and accessibility barriers;
- to develop new research ideas and foster collaboration, both between institutions and across disciplines;
- to maximize the impact of EPSRC's investments by increasing the knowledge transfer and facilitating access to facilities within the UK; and
- to encourage the development of new collaborations with industry.

Eligibility

The call is open to any ECR within a UK-based [PRIMaRE partner institution](#) that is working on MRE research (wave and tidal). Eligibility for this fund is limited to Early Career Researchers who are either:

- Early Career Academic Staff (less than 3 years from first academic appointment),
- Post-Doctoral Research Assistants,
- PhD Students.

The applicant should be employed by an organisation that is eligible to receive EPSRC funding. A list of organisations eligible to apply to EPSRC is provided at: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/>

Eligible Costs

Total eligible project costs of £5,000 are permitted. **Only direct costs will be permitted, i.e. no indirect costs, staff time or core institutional costs can be claimed.** In-line with EPSRC funding policy costs are paid at 80% FEC. This means that although you will be able to spend £5,000 on your project, only 80% of the cost will be able to be recovered from PRIMaRE, the remaining 20% will be required to be funded by your department/University. This is normal UKRI funding practice and your department will have a process to cover costs associated with the non-recovered 20% of FEC.

All applicants should follow their institutional grant costing process and consult with their departmental costing team. **All applications will require a host statement of support which must state that your institution is willing to cover the cost shortfall in recovering only 80% of direct project costs.**

Examples of What the Scheme Might Support

This is a non-exhaustive list and innovative applications are welcomed.

- A discrete research activity, possibly seed funding leading to a new more substantial proposal, including a research Fellowship application,
- Travel for a national or international collaboration,
- Small equipment/consumables,
- Costs for publications arising from the project
- Public awareness engagement activities and support for developing outreach events.

The scheme will not support costs associated with travel or fees associated with an event such as a workshop or conference. Please see the other funding opportunities provided by PRIMaRE for travel to events.

It is not intended that the scheme be used to just extend an ECR's contract of employment.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria. Applicants should identify how their application fulfils each of the assessment criteria.

- **Personal Development** – How will the requested funds support you in developing as an early career academic?
- **Additionality** – How does the proposed activity go beyond your current activities, how will it transform them, and why can't it be supported by existing or more general funds? Does the proposed activity include a collaborative element, either with other institutions or across disciplines?
- **Research Excellence** – Demonstrate that your proposed activity will be of excellent scientific and academic quality.

- **Outputs and dissemination** – How will your proposed activity deliver impact, both in a scientific or engineering context and promote you as an Early Career Researcher.
- **Alignment** – Proposed activities should be aligned with the objectives of PRIMaRE. Applicants should identify where their activities fit within the research priorities identified by PRIMaRE, which can be found on our website [HERE](#).

Letters of Support

A maximum of two letters of support, each of a maximum length of 1 page, can be submitted with your application which should include a letter from an appropriate project partner if required for your project. One letter of support must come from your host institution and state that you have consulted your costing team and that your department is willing to support your application and will cover the cost shortfall in recovering only 80% of direct project costs. Additionally, if you are a non-autonomous researcher, i.e. a Post-Doctoral Research Assistant or PhD student, then the letter of support should confirm that your supervisor is supportive of your application.

How to Apply

The following documents form the application for the ECR-SRP:

- A 2-page **Case for Support** that addresses the assessment criteria described above and includes an explanation of the costs for the proposed activity. The case for support should include at least the following sections:
 - 1 paragraph **summary** of the proposed activity suitable for promoting on the PRIMaRE website if awarded,
 - A full **description of the proposed activity**, including confirmation that your proposed activity complies with your institution's Health and Safety processes and any risk mitigation actions you have considered with regards to COVID-19
 - 1 paragraph explanation of how the activity will **support your development** as an ECR,
 - 1 paragraph explanation of the potential **engineering impact** of your proposed project,
 - 1 paragraph explanation of **project costs**.
- 1-page **CV** that clearly states career stage to satisfy eligibility and confirms that the current position outlasts the funding applied for.
- 1-page **Letter of Support** from your host institution
- up to 1 further 1-page **Letter of Support** from a project partner.

All documents should have a minimum of 20 mm margins on all sides and adopt a font of not less than 11pt. **The documentation should be combined and submitted as a single pdf.**

Submission of Applications

This ECR-SRP call is open until **noon on Friday 20th November 2020**. Completed applications should be submitted to PRIMaRE via email to: primareweb@gmail.com with the subject line: "**<Applicant Surname> PRIMaRE ECR-SRP Application**" and also CC in Scott Brown (scott.brown@plymouth.ac.uk).

COVID-19 Consideration

Given the current status of COVID-19 pandemic, and its potential impact on ECR activities that would either require international travel or contravene current UK Government guidelines, we recommend that proposals submitted to this call consider activities that can be both executed in a COVID-19 compliant manner and have limited risks for delivery within the timeframes as set out in this call. All applicants are required to confirm that their proposed activity complies with their institution's Health and Safety processes and that they have consulted with their local Safety Officer as appropriate. Please include any risk mitigation actions that you have considered in your application.

Conditions of Award

- The Lead applicant is expected to produce a maximum one-page ECR-SRP report for the PRIMaRE Website reporting back on the achievements of the activity.
- Awarded applications must be completed and deliver the final report by **August 31st 2021**.
- Awarded ECR-SRPs will be paid after completion of the activity, for this the applicant's institution will need to submit an invoice and proof of expenses by **August 31st 2021**.
- It is expected that a funded ECR-SRP would set the basis for future collaborative outcomes, such as: joint research projects, journal publications, etc. and that these will be reported to PRIMaRE.

Successful ECR-SRP institutions will also be expected to sign a Research Grant agreement, formalising the required outputs, financial contributions by PRIMaRE and the details of the activities to be undertaken. This agreement will be forwarded to successful applicants with a copy of the award letter.

Enquiries

Questions or enquiries about this Call for Proposals should only be made by email to:

primareweb@gmail.com

A list of FAQs will be posted in the PRIMaRE website at:

<http://www.primare.org>