

HESTIA Plus Fund Application: Guidance and Q&A

24th June 2026

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HESTIA

Timeline

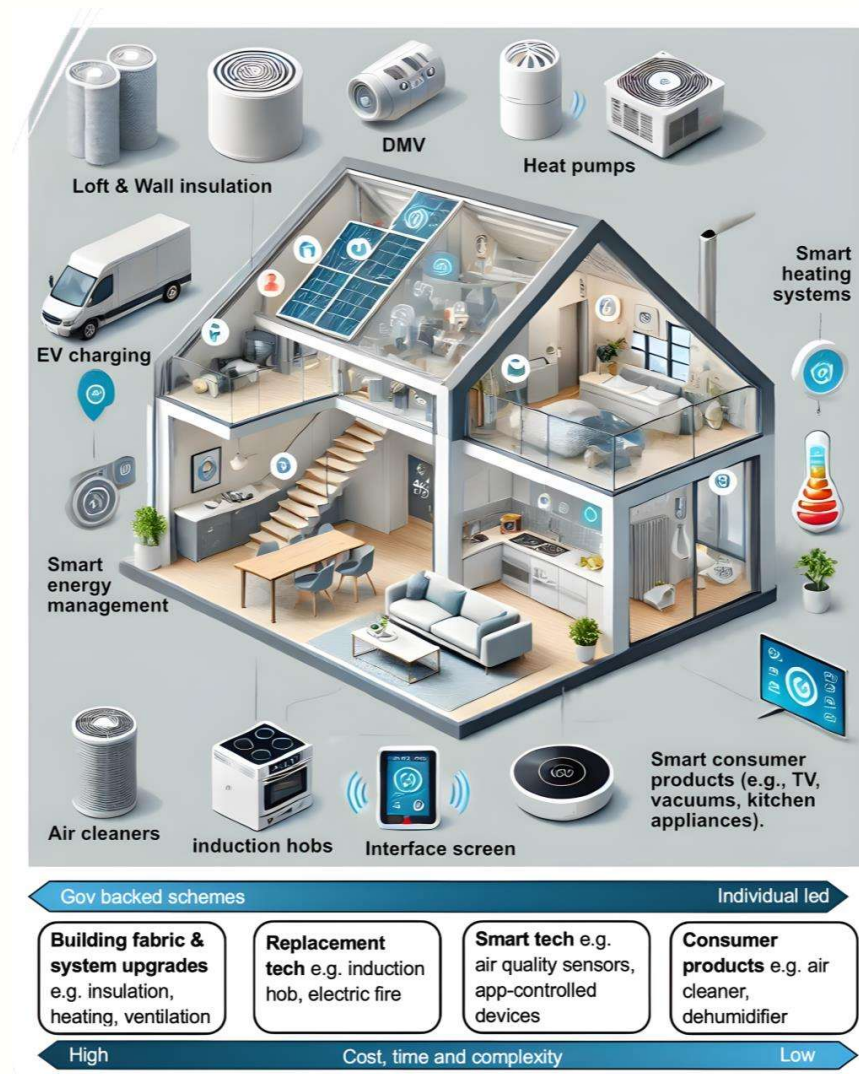
- 28th May – applicants will be sent the application form, budget spreadsheet and guidance document
- June (Today!) – Q&A session
- June (TBC) – public member meeting for feedback on proposals
- 17th July 2026 23:59: Application deadline
- Mid-September 2026: Peer review complete
- End of September 2026: Panel meeting
- Early October 2026: Ratification of awards by Advisory Board
- By end of October 2026: Applicants notified of outcomes
- 1st January 2027: Projects start
- Mid-March 2027: Check-in meeting between each project team and HESTIA lead
- 30th June 2027: Projects end
- 31st July 2027: Final reports & funding expenditure sent to HESTIA
- Autumn 2027: Project presentations at HESTIA network event

Overview of themes

- We are looking to fund research projects that will broadly be based around enabling healthier indoor home environments for everyone, and focus on health, technologies, and equity and justice. We will fund research projects that focus on at least one of the following themes:
 1. **Existing technologies used in homes**
 2. **The impacts of climate change on housing**
 3. **Co-producing healthy homes**

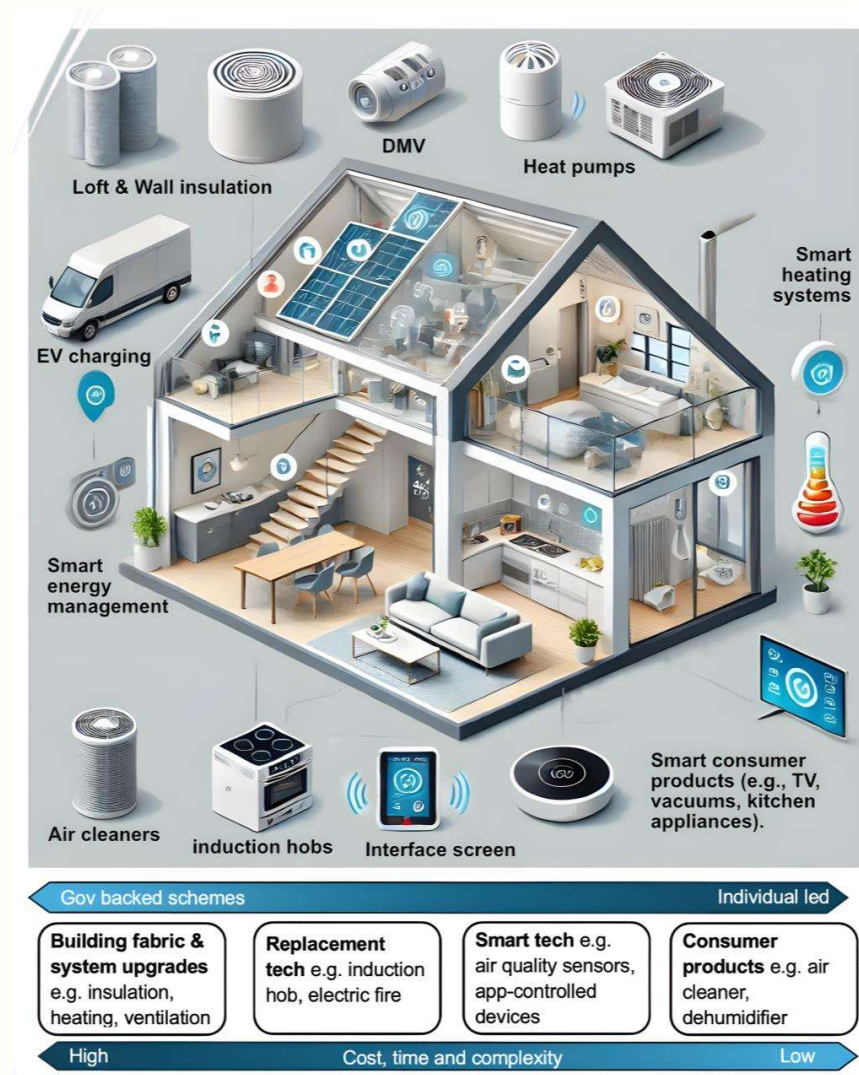
Existing technologies used in homes

- **Existing technologies used in homes** (e.g. smart meters, air cleaners), and how they might help towards meeting low carbon / net zero targets and promote human health
- Crucially this **must consider affordability** and those **who might be most vulnerable** (e.g. older people, and those with existing physical/mental health difficulties, and low-income households)



Existing technologies used in homes

- Alongside building scale interventions, a range of other technologies applied in homes may impact on climate and health-equity.
- How might these different technologies in our homes affect our health, and the environment?
- Where do they support each other, and where might they be in conflict?
- And how do these relate to affordability and vulnerability?



The impacts of climate change on housing

- The impacts of climate change on housing, and how homes can be 'future-proofed' to be resilient to extreme conditions (e.g. extreme heat/cold, air pollution)
- Must be done in a way that is **low carbon and promotes human health**, and is **affordable/cost-effective**.



The impacts of climate change on housing

- We still want homes to be something that improves human and planetary health, and reduces health inequalities
- BUT this theme is focused on the longevity of these changes so that buildings not only can cope with demands now, but demands in the future.



Co-producing healthy homes

- ...with communities affected by poor quality housing
- The burden of **poor quality housing is not equally shared** across society
- People are experts in their own lives



Co-producing healthy homes

- Engineering (or other) interventions must understand the people living in homes to be successful.
 - Why people do or do not use certain technologies?
 - Wrong assumptions about how people live their lives and use their homes
- Crucially we are mandating that all funded projects through HESTIA will need to recruit a public member as part of the project (and this is something that we will support).



More information - applicants

- **Deadline: 23:59 on 17th July 2026**
- A researcher who attended the sandpit must lead the application, but they can bring in people who did not attend
 - You can include as many additional co-applicants as you wish but worth bearing in mind that these are small-scale projects with fairly limited budgets and each applicant should have a clearly defined role in the project and be appropriately costed.
 - **You can be involved in multiple applications, but only lead one.**
- Research proposals must:
 - Involve at least one non-academic partner
 - Meaningfully involve at least one individual from a community affected by poor quality housing

Some more information

- **Projects must start on 1st January 2027 and be completed within 6 months of the award.** Two of these projects can cost up to £30,000 and two can cost up to £65,000 (at 100% full economic cost; we will fund 80% of this). We hope that these projects will lead to larger scale funding applications in the future.
- *If ethical approval is needed, it must be in place before the project starts.*
- We expect projects to comply with UKRI grant terms and conditions.
- We will fund research projects that focus on at least one of the following themes:
 1. **Existing technologies used in homes**
 2. **The impacts of climate change on housing**
 3. **Co-producing healthy homes**

The application form

- **Section 1** requests the names and contact details of the applicants along with a brief description of the role each co-applicant will play in the project, as well as the title of the project and it's intended duration (maximum is 6 months).
- *Note, the lead applicant must be resident within the UK, & have a contract at a UK-based higher education institution until at least 30th September 2027 to cover project & reporting period*



HESTIA PLUS FUND APPLICATION FORM



Section 1: Application details

Project Title		
Start date: 1 st January 2027 (this is mandatory)	Proposed duration (max. 6 months):	
Total cost of proposal at 100% FEC (max. £65,000):		Total cost requested from HESTIA (80% FEC):
Organisation where the grant would be held:		
Principal Applicant		
Full name		
Position		
Do you consider yourself to be an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?	Yes	We define an ECR as those that are immediately post doctorate, and/or transitioning to become an independent researcher. For example, this includes postdoctoral researchers and/or Lecturers/Assistant Professors.
	No	
Contract end date* DD/MM/YYYY or open-ended	*Note this must be until at least 30 th September 2027 to ensure the whole project period plus final report is covered.	
Organisation		
Division / Department		
Email address		
Telephone number		
Full postal address		
Discipline		
Co-applicant (non-academic partner)		
Full name		
Position		
Organisation		
Email address		
Role in / contribution to the proposed project:		
Sector		
Co-applicant (public/community member)		
Full name		
Email address		
Role in / contribution to the proposed project:		
Co-applicant (please leave blank if irrelevant)		
Full name		
Position		
Do you consider yourself to be an Early Career Researcher?	Yes	We define an ECR as those that are immediately post doctorate, and/or transitioning to become an independent researcher. For example, this includes postdoctoral researchers and/or Lecturers/Assistant Professors.
	No	

The application form

- **Section 2** is the main research proposal. This comprises the following sections:
- **1)** Lay summary, **2)** Sandpit themes, **3)** Introduction, **4)** Aim(s) of the research and research question(s), **5)** Methodology, **6)** Expected outcomes/outputs, **7)** How the public / affected communities will be meaningfully involved in the project, **8)** Responsible Research and Innovation and ethical considerations, **9)** Timeline of activity, and **10)** Justification of costs
- *Plus, optional section – if your proposal is for the larger award and you would consider accepting the smaller award (up to £30,000) then explain which components of your project you would retain within this smaller budget*



HESTIA PLUS FUND APPLICATION FORM



Section 1: Application details

Project Title		
Start date: 1 st January 2027 (this is mandatory)	Proposed duration (max. 6 months):	
Total cost of proposal at 100% FEC (max. £65,000):		Total cost requested from HESTIA (80% FEC):
Organisation where the grant would be held:		
Principal Applicant		
Full name		
Position		
Do you consider yourself to be an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?	Yes	We define an ECR as those that are immediately post doctorate, and/or transitioning to become an independent researcher. For example, this includes postdoctoral researchers and/or Lecturers/Assistant Professors.
	No	
Contract end date* DD/MM/YYYY or open-ended	*Note this must be until at least 30 th September 2027 to ensure the whole project period plus final report is covered.	
Organisation		
Division / Department		
Email address		
Telephone number		
Full postal address		
Discipline		
Co-applicant (non-academic partner)		
Full name		
Position		
Organisation		
Email address		
Role in / contribution to the proposed project:		
Sector		
Co-applicant (public/community member)		
Full name		
Email address		
Role in / contribution to the proposed project:		
Co-applicant (please leave blank if irrelevant)		
Full name		
Position		
Do you consider yourself to be an Early Career Researcher?	Yes	We define an ECR as those that are immediately post doctorate, and/or transitioning to become an independent researcher. For example, this includes postdoctoral researchers and/or Lecturers/Assistant Professors.
	No	

Additional parts

- **Section 3** requires inclusion of a CV for the principal applicant and each co-applicant. Each CV should be no longer than 1 page.
- **Budget spreadsheet** – complete a template and submit it alongside your completed application form.
- Email completed application form + spreadsheet to D.S.Groves@leeds.ac.uk with email header 'NAME OF PI – HESTIA application' by 23:59 on 17th July 2026



HESTIA PLUS FUND APPLICATION FORM



Section 1: Application details

Project Title		HESTIA Plus Fund Budget Form	
Start date: 1 st January 2027 (this is mandatory)		Proposed end date	
Total cost of proposal at 100% FEC (max. £65,000):		Total	
Organisation where the grant would be held:		Application overview	
Principal Applicant		1 Principal Investigator	
Full name		2 Lead Institution	
Position		3 Project title	
Do you consider yourself to be an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?		4 Mandatory start date	
Yes	We define an ECR as th transitioning to becom includes postdoctoral r	1st January 2027	
No		Proposed end date	
Contract end date* DD/MMM/YYYY or open-ended		Budget	
Organisation		Include VAT where applicable e.g. equipment, consultants, etc.	
Division / Department		100% Full Economic Cost (FEC) (£)	
Email address		HESTIA Contribution (£)	
Telephone number		80%	
Full postal address		Directly Incurred (DI) Costs	
Discipline		Staff costs for staff who will be paid from the grant	
Co-applicant (non-academic partner)		Travel and subsistence	
Full name		Other DI costs (specify): Public member(s) / advisor(s)	
Position		Other DI costs (specify): Non-academic partner costs	
Organisation		Other DI costs (specify):	
Email address		Other DI costs (specify):	
Role in / contribution to the proposed project:		Other DI costs (specify):	
Sector		Other DI costs (specify):	
Co-applicant (public/community member)		Subtotal	
Full name		Directly Allocated (DA) Costs and Indirect Costs	
Email address		80%	
Role in / contribution to the proposed project:		Directly allocated staff costs	
Co-applicant (please leave blank if irrelevant)		Other DA costs (specify):	
Full name		Other DA costs (specify):	
Position		Indirect costs	
Do you consider yourself to be an Early Career Researcher?		Any DA non-academic partner costs	
Yes	We define an ECR as th transitioning to becom includes postdoctoral r	Subtotal	
No		Exceptions	
		100%	
		Please specify:	
		Please specify:	
		Please specify:	
		Subtotal	

Budget

- All proposals should be costed on the basis of FEC. If a grant is awarded, HESTIA will provide funding at 80% of the FEC.
The lead organisation must agree to find the balance of FEC for the project from other resources.
- Please liaise with your research grants office to calculate this and ensure you get your budget signed off internally before submission (usually 1-2 weeks before d/line).
- Use standard EPSRC project grant template in Worktribe.



HESTIA Plus Fund Budget Form

Application overview

1	Principal Investigator		
2	Lead Institution		
3	Project title		
4	Mandatory start date	1st January 2027	Proposed end date

Budget

Include VAT where applicable e.g. equipment, consultants, etc.

	100% Full Economic Cost (FEC) (£)	HESTIA Contribution (£) 80%
Directly Incurred (DI) Costs		
Staff costs for staff who will be paid from the grant		£0.00
Travel and subsistence		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify): Public member(s) / advisor(s)		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify): Non-academic partner costs		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify):		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify):		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify):		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify):		£0.00
Other DI costs (specify):		£0.00
Subtotal		
Directly Allocated (DA) Costs and Indirect Costs		80%
Directly allocated staff costs		£0.00
Other DA costs (specify):		£0.00
Other DA costs (specify):		£0.00
Indirect costs		£0.00
Any DA non-academic partner costs		£0.00
Subtotal		
Exceptions		100%
Please specify:		£0.00
Please specify:		£0.00
Please specify:		£0.00
Subtotal		

Budget



Directly incurred costs

- Costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent, and are supported by an auditable record e.g., *RA salaries, public member & non-academic partner costs, payments to participants, consumables, travel, venue hire, software licenses, dissemination...*

Directly allocated costs

- Costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. They are charged to projects on the basis of estimates rather than actual costs e.g., *investigator salaries (for those on open-ended /permanent contracts), estate costs (single figure), costs for use of existing equipment/facilities*

Indirect costs

- These should include the costs of administration, such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services. Like estates costs, Indirect costs will be calculated by research organisations and a single figure will be required at the time of application.

The assessment process

- Each proposal will be independently reviewed by five individuals:
 - Two HESTIA investigators;
 - two non-academics (e.g., project partners not involved in a proposal);
 - and at least one public member.
- Reviewers will rate each application by providing (i) an overall scientific score of 1-6 and (ii) a score for the level of meaningful involvement of the public / affected communities within the project (1-6).
- *Note, that applications will need to have **an average score of 4 or above on public involvement** to be taken through to the panel to be considered for HESTIA funding.*

Scientific score

What exceptional looks like!

- The proposal is exceptional in terms of its potential scientific merit.
- The project is extremely timely, novel, and answers an urgent and important research question within at least one of the sandpit themes.
- It is very likely to lead to a larger funding application.
- It employs high quality methodology, is clearly feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides exceptional value for money.
- There is an extremely strong cross-disciplinary and cross-sector project team.

Overall scientific score	Definition
6 (Exceptional)	The proposal is exceptional in terms of its potential scientific merit. The project is extremely timely, novel, and answers an urgent and important research question within at least one of the sandpit themes. It is very likely to lead to a larger funding application. It employs high quality methodology, is clearly feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides exceptional value for money. There is an extremely strong cross-disciplinary and cross-sector project team.
5 (Excellent)	The proposal is excellent in terms of its potential scientific merit. The project is very timely, novel, and answers an important research question within at least one of the sandpit themes. It is likely to lead to a larger funding application. It employs high quality methodology, seems feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides excellent value for money. There is a strong cross-disciplinary and cross-sector project team.
4 (Very good)	The proposal is very good and has considerable potential scientific merit. The project is timely and answers an important research question within one of the sandpit themes. It has the potential to lead to a larger funding application. It employs good quality methodology, seems feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides reasonable value for money. There is an appropriate cross-disciplinary and/or cross-sector project team.
3 (Good)	The proposal has good potential scientific merit but is not of consistently high quality. The research question is important but may not be urgent or novel and may not fully align with the sandpit themes. There may be some concerns about the appropriateness of the methods employed. It may have limited potential to lead to a larger funding application. There may also be uncertainty about the feasibility of conducting the project within the proposed timeframe and/or its value for money. There may be limited cross-disciplinary and/or cross-sector expertise in the project team.
2 (Weak)	The proposal will add to understanding but is of lesser quality or urgency than more highly rated proposals. The research question has little alignment with the sandpit themes. There are likely to be concerns about the methods employed, feasibility and value for money. The proposal is unlikely to lead to a larger funding application. The project team may also lack relevant cross-disciplinary/cross-sector expertise.
1 (Poor)	The proposal is flawed in its scientific approach, or is repetitious of other work, or otherwise judged not worth pursuing; or even though it possibly has sound objectives, it appears seriously defective in its methodology. The research question does not fall within the sandpit themes. The project is not feasible within the timeframe and does not provide value for money. Or insufficient information was provided so it is not possible to make a higher rating.

Public involvement score

What exceptional looks like!

- At least one member of the public will help lead the project and be involved in every stage of the research – from designing the proposal, through to delivering the activities, analysing/interpreting the findings, and disseminating the results.
- There is exceptional support planned for the public member(s) and extensive adjustments made to ensure they can be fully involved.
- The public member(s) have extremely relevant lived experience.
- Payment to public member(s) is above minimum expected rates, fully covers their involvement, and will be made via the easiest possible method.
- The public member(s) will play a key role in the larger funding application planned for after this project.

Score for public involvement	Definition
6* (Exceptional)	At least one member of the public will help lead the project and be involved in every stage of the research – from designing the proposal, through to delivering the activities, analysing/interpreting the findings, and disseminating the results. There is exceptional support planned for the public member(s) and extensive adjustments made to ensure they can be fully involved. The public member(s) have extremely relevant lived experience. Payment to public member(s) is above minimum expected rates, fully covers their involvement, and will be made via the easiest possible method. The public member(s) will play a key role in the larger funding application planned for after this project.
5* (Excellent)	The project will involve at least one member of the public in every stage of the research. There is excellent support planned for the public member(s) and adjustments have been made to ensure they can be fully involved. The public member(s) have extremely relevant lived experience. Payment to public member(s) may be above minimum expected rates, fully covers their involvement, and will be made via the easiest possible method. The public member(s) will play a role in the larger funding application planned for after this project.
4* (Very good)	The public member(s) is involved in at least two stages of the research. There is very good support planned for the public member(s) and adjustments have been made to ensure they can be involved. The public member(s) have very relevant lived experience. Sufficient costs are included for public member involvement and made via the easiest possible method. The public member(s) may be involved in the larger funding application planned for after this project.
3 (Good)	The public member is only involved in one stage of the research (e.g., dissemination). There is good support planned for the public member(s) and some adjustments have been made to ensure they can be involved. The public member(s) have some relevant lived experience. Sufficient costs are included for public member involvement but the method of paying these has not been considered or is unnecessarily complicated.
2 (Weak)	The public member only has a consultation role and is not direct involved in the research. There is minimal support planned for the public member(s) and no adjustments have been made for them. There are insufficient costs included for public consultation/involvement.
1 (Poor)	No involvement or consultation of the public at all. Or the public involvement proposed could be potentially harmful.

Results of your application

- The average scientific and public involvement scores for the remaining proposals will be summed and this combined score used to create a ranked list of proposals.
- The top-ranking proposals (~5 for larger awards and ~5 for smaller awards) will be taken through to the panel (comprising all reviewers, chaired by Prof Helen Fisher and Prof Suzanne Bartington) in late September to discuss and re-score.
- Final scores will be a weighted average of the peer review (60%) and panel (40%) stages. The top two ranked projects for the larger awards and the top two ranked projects for the smaller awards will be recommended for award and ratified by the HESTIA Advisory Board in October 2026. In the result of a tie, the panel will decide based on closeness of fit to the themes of the sandpit or give smaller amounts to multiple projects.
- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by end of October 2026
- Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants in a constructive and transparent manner.

**Any
questions?**
