1. **How do I apply for this call?**
   All proposals under this call must be completed and submitted through the UKRI's Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system ([www.je-s.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.je-s.rcuk.ac.uk)). Please refer to our Je-S guidance ([https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/funding-opportunities/ukri-iscf-manufacturing-made-smarter-jes-guidance/](https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/funding-opportunities/ukri-iscf-manufacturing-made-smarter-jes-guidance/)) for further information.

2. **How much funding is available for this post?**
   The funding available for the Research Director post is £125,000 (100% fEC) across 5 months, of which ESRC will contribute 80%. This is expected to cover the Research Director’s salary costs, support staff, and a range of strategic activities.

3. **Can the applicant be an Early Career Researcher?**
   No. It is an expectation that the applicant has an outstanding track record of world-leading research and impact within areas relevant to innovation and IDTs in manufacturing.

4. **Can the proposal nominate more than one Principal Investigator?**
   The identified Principal Investigator(s) must have a substantial academic element to their current role and be based at the eligible UK Research Organisation which is to submit the proposal and administer the grant.

5. **Can the application include Co-Investigators?**
   No. Co-Investigators are not permitted for this call. However, joint applications (including job shares) for Co-Research Directors are welcome where a clear split of responsibility is given. If submitting a joint application, the Je-S application form will require that one of the Co-Research Directors will be listed as PI, the other will need to be listed as Co-I.

6. **This call is being administered by ESRC, does that mean only Social Scientists are eligible to apply?**
   The successful candidate will need to demonstrate a deep understanding of the economic and social sciences and how they can support the UK manufacturing
sector accelerate its innovation and diffusion of industrial digital technologies (IDTs). The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate a strong commitment to interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches to research, with evidence of having previously drawn together a broad range of perspectives and approaches from across the economic and social sciences, engineering, digital technology and beyond.

7. **Support staff are permitted on this call. Please define ‘support staff’.** Various staff can be included on the application to support the Principal Investigator, but the intellectual leadership, management, organisation and fiscal responsibility for the grant will rest with the PI alone. Examples of staff who could be included on an application: research, administrative, IT, etc.

8. **Will the appointed Research Director be permitted to apply for funding under other calls within the Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge?** To avoid conflicts of interest, the Research Director will not be permitted to apply, or be involved in other applications, for funding under other calls within the Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge. This restriction only applies to the Research Director and does not apply to other individuals at their institution or to any named research staff. The Research Director and named research staff will continue to be eligible to apply under other UKRI funding calls which are not linked to the Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge, including to responsive mode schemes and calls under other initiatives. Where further funding is sought from UKRI the Research Director’s total time commitment on UKRI grants cannot exceed 100 per cent of their contracted hours.

9. **What happens to my proposal once I have submitted it?** Once your proposal is submitted via Je-S it will be checked by the UKRI Grants Operations team to make sure the proposal fits UKRI’S basic eligibility criteria. Your proposal will then be subject to further checks to ensure it is eligible for consideration for this call. Your proposal could be rejected at this stage if deemed ineligible. If it is considered acceptable, it will be considered by the Panel at its shortlisting meeting. If your proposal is shortlisted you will then be invited to attend an interview by the Panel. You will be notified of the outcome of your interview in February 2021.

10. **Who are the Panel Members?** The Panel is made up of senior UKRI colleagues, as well as external individuals with expertise in digital manufacturing and of undertaking a similar Director role.

11. **Where and when will the interviews take place?** We are currently finalising arrangements for the interviews, however we can confirm they will take place in February 2021.

12. **Where can I find out more information about the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund?** The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund is part of government’s Industrial Strategy, the long-term plan to raise productivity and earning power in the UK. More information can be found at [www.ukri.org/innovation/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund](http://www.ukri.org/innovation/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund).
13. **When will further information about funding opportunities under the ISCF Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge be available?**
   The webpages for the Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge have information on all funding opportunities and will be regularly updated. You can also sign up for regular updates from the challenge from these webpages. See here - https://www.ukri.org/innovation/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund/manufacturing-made-smarter-challenge/ for further information.

14. **Who do I contact if I have any queries?**
   Please direct any queries to:
   - Email: MMS@esrc.ukri.org