

## Expression of Interest Guidance

Expressions of interest are invited for four research topics of key importance to the Yorkshire and the Humber screen industries.

### Background

XR Stories supports research and development for companies working in cutting-edge digital technologies in the Yorkshire and Humber region. We do this through a programme of funding, research collaboration and industry engagement. We work across film, TV, games, media arts, heritage, advertising and technology to champion a new future in storytelling.

XR Stories is putting the innovative and dynamic digital storytelling community of our region at the front of the global creative and cultural landscape. We draw together the University of York's research excellence and strong business focus. This programme of activity is a £15M investment by AHRC, ERDF, the University of York, the British Film Institute and Screen Yorkshire.

The Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN) is a business-facing initiative supporting the TV, film and games industries in Yorkshire and the Humber. SIGN aims to make this region the UK's centre for digital creativity, and a model of diverse and inclusive activity. In order to do this, SIGN connects companies, support agencies and universities through a programme of training, business development, research and evaluation.

SIGN is a £6.4M project funded by Research England, the University of York, and its partners. The University of York leads the initiative, working with Screen Yorkshire and eight other Yorkshire universities. An extensive network of collaboration ensures that SIGN is equipped to deliver maximum impact across the region.

### Research Areas

XR Stories and SIGN wish to commission research into four distinct areas that will help inform our work and provide new knowledge to support the development of the screen industries in Yorkshire and the Humber. The four areas of research are:

1. **Business development intelligence for Yorkshire and the Humber creative businesses** - scoping and developing advice for SMEs relevant to XR Stories and SIGN about short and medium term horizons on the following topics: investment opportunities; emerging markets for immersive storytelling; access to finance; new business models; other relevant topics for business development.
2. **Building an environmentally friendly creative XR sector** - XR relies on digital devices with relatively short lifespans, energy-intensive manufacturing processes, cloud platforms, battery technologies and other elements which pose threats to environmental sustainability. We are seeking research which begins to understand these threats; quantifies the environmental impacts of creative XR technologies; and

examines possibilities for sustainable manufacture, consumption and recycling of creative XR technologies.

3. **Y&H Creative R&D Futures** - scoping and horizon-scanning which sectors offer potential for transformative development in Yorkshire and the Humber's harnessing the creative economy. This research should examine policy trajectories, undertake SWOT analyses, scope infrastructure requirements, market and investment opportunities, research funding, amongst other factors, to help inform stakeholders about how and where future work should be focused.
4. **Virtual Production Horizons** - virtual production has emerged as a key set of tools and processes for the future of film and TV production. We are seeking research which maps the virtual production ecosystem at a global and national scale, and identifies key elements for effective and efficient adoption of virtual production methodologies.

Applications will be assessed through a two stage process to ensure projects are focused for the benefit of the region's screen industries. First, expression of interest proposals will be assessed by staff at the University of York. Successful applicants will work with XR Stories and SIGN staff to hone projects, develop timetables and agree deliverables.

### **Eligibility**

Projects must be led by an academic PI based at a UK higher education institution, but can also include relevant partners (e.g. other research organisations, industry stakeholders, independent consultants).

The research must demonstrate benefits to the Yorkshire and the Humber region.

All project teams must demonstrate they are working in an ethical manner and in line with XR Stories and SIGN's EDI policy (see [website](#) for details).

### **Finances and Outputs**

We envisage providing up to £30,000 in cash funding per project.

Topics 1-3:

Eligible costs are in accordance with [Arts and Humanities Research Council Terms and Conditions](#). Projects will be funded up to 80% Full Economic Cost.

Topic 4:

Eligible costs are in accordance with [Research England Development Fund Terms and Conditions](#). Projects will be funded up to 100% Full Economic Cost.

Although a detailed cost breakdown will not be necessary at the Expression of Interest stage, we do require an outline of what you plan to spend the budget on. An approved costing from your institution will be required by applicants who are invited to submit a full

application<sup>1</sup>. A costings template is provided below and as part of the Eoi application form should you have full costings at this stage.

All projects should produce at a minimum:

- a report for XR Stories and SIGN who may choose to make this available publicly
- an industry briefing which summarises the key findings and is aimed at a mixed industry/public audience

Expressions of interest should be submitted via online application form (see website for details).

## **Assessment**

Expressions of interest will be reviewed by members of the XR Stories and SIGN teams and a selection invited to submit full proposals. These applicants will work with XR Stories and SIGN staff to hone projects, develop timetables and agree deliverables. Full proposals will require a full case for support, detailed costings (see below) and a workplan.

EOIs will be assessed based on their alignment with research needs, value for money, proposed outputs and approach to EDI.

Timetable:

Deadline - 6th December, 2021 at midday

Notification progression to full proposal - before Christmas

Project start - Projects are likely to commence early 2022 and should report within 3-6 months of commencing.

For questions, please contact: [enquiries@xrstories.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@xrstories.co.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants from the University of York are reminded that, as per our local procedures, outline proposals must be costed and approved in Worktribe at all stages of submission, including the Expression of Interest stage, even though a detailed cost breakdown will not be necessary at this initial stage.

## Final Proposals

Expressions of interest will be reviewed by members of the XR Stories and SIGN teams and a selection invited to submit full proposals. These applicants will work with XR Stories and SIGN staff to hone projects, develop timetables and agree deliverables. Full proposals will require a full case for support, detailed costings (see below) and a workplan.

### Costings

Final project costings will need to be submitted using these tables. This level of detail is not required at the EoI stage, but we include them here to allow applicants advance notice.

Please use this table for projects focused on research areas 1, 2 and 3

	<b>FEC Budget</b>	<b>Funded Amount (80% FEC)</b>
<b>DIRECTLY INCURRED COSTS</b>		
Staff	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Consumables	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Travel & Subsistence	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Other DI	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
<b>DIRECTLY ALLOCATED COSTS</b>		
Investigators	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Estates	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Other DA	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
<b>INDIRECT COSTS</b>	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
<b>EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS</b>	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ Insert amount</b>	<b>£ Insert amount</b>

Please use this table for projects focused on research area 4.

	<b>FEC Budget*</b>	<b>Funded Amount*</b>
<b>DIRECTLY INCURRED COSTS</b>		
Staff	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Consumables	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Travel & Subsistence	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Other DI	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount

DIRECTLY ALLOCATED COSTS		
Investigators	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Estates	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
Other DA	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
INDIRECT COSTS	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS	£ Insert amount	£ Insert amount
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ Insert amount</b>	<b>£ Insert amount</b>

*The difference between the FEC budget and the Funded Amount for research area 4 is counted as an in-kind contribution to the SIGN project.*