# Sponsor roles and responsibilities

This document outlines the NC3Rs' expectations of Sponsors involved in CRACK IT Challenges.

## Confidentiality

Sponsors are expected to:

- Treat any information disclosed from potential applicants, including written applications, as confidential. Details of individual applications and consortia, activities of the Panel or the outcomes should not be discussed with any other external parties. The NC3Rs will co-ordinate applicant feedback. Full details can be found in the Review Panel appointment letter.

- Treat the details of the Challenge as confidential until the Challenge is launched.

## Intellectual property (IP)

- Sponsors will not have any rights to intellectual property (IP) developed within the project. IP developed within the project is the property of the contractor (Challenge winner) and its sub-contractors, as described in the agreement between the NC3Rs and the contractor. Please refer to section 6.1 of the Guide for Participants for further information relating to IP.

## Challenge development and launch

Sponsors are expected to:

- Work with the NC3Rs to develop the Challenge brief, including the Challenge deliverables.

- Attend the Challenge launch webinar to present the Challenge to potential applicants.

- Comment and approve the Challenge Q&As after the launch webinar for publication on the Innovation Platform website.

- Interact with potential applicants between the Challenge launch webinar and the application closing date to ensure the best quality applications are received from the most appropriate teams.

# Review Panel – Assessment of written proposals

Written proposals are assessed by a Review Panel to shortlist applications (up to three). Shortlisted applicants are invited to a Challenge Panel interview to present their proposal. Please note: If the Challenge includes a proof-of-concept phase, shortlisted applicants will be awarded funding to undertake proof-of-concept studies (up to nine months). At the end of the proof-of-concept phase, awardees will submit an application and present their proof-of-concept results and plans for solving the full Challenge requirements to the Challenge Panel.

Sponsors are expected to:

- Read all guidance related to the review process.

- Review all applications in line with the scoring criteria outlined in the Guide to Review Panel.

- Attend the Review Panel meeting online via Zoom.

- Introduce their Challenge at the start of the Review Panel meeting. This should take no longer than 10 minutes and aim to deliver an 'overall picture' of the Challenge and what they are hoping will be achieved.

- Comment on individual applications from a Sponsor's perspective, for example, quality of interaction between Sponsor and applicant and competitive advantage. Sponsors are not expected to make personal comments about individual applicants.

- Submit one review score per organisation regardless of how many representatives attend.

### Proof-of-concept work

- In-kind contributions from the Sponsors are not required during the proof-of-concept phase but are encouraged should they benefit the Challenge.

- Sponsors should ensure, wherever possible, that all awardees have access to the same information in order to negate any potential bias.

- Sponsors should be available for project update meetings (recommended approximately quarterly) with proof-of-concept awardees. Organisation of these meetings is the responsibility of the awardees.

# Challenge Panel – Applicant interviews

Shortlisted proposals are assessed by a Challenge Panel in a 'Dragons' Den'-style pitch and interview. Up to one award is made to deliver the Challenge requirements.

Sponsors are expected to:

- Review all applications according to the scoring criteria outlined in the Guide to Challenge Panel.

- Gather and provide a consensus view from their organisation on each application.

- Attend the Challenge Panel to interview the applicants.

- Please note: If the Challenge includes a proof-of-concept phase, provide feedback to the Panel on their experiences of working with the applicants during the proof-of-concept phase. Sponsors are not expected to make personal comments about individual applicants.

**Delivery of the Challenge**

Sponsors are expected to:

- Provide in-kind contributions to successful awardees.

- Sign an agreement with the NC3Rs describing the agreed in-kind contributions and intellectual property arrangements.

- Attend project management meetings as outlined in the agreement.

- Collaborate with the awardee throughout the project.

## Notes:

- The Review and Challenge Panels are independent Panels consisting of members from academia and industry appointed by the NC3Rs for their scientific expertise.

- Membership of the Review and Challenge Panels including Declarations of Interest (DOI) is published on the [NC3Rs Innovation Platform](#).

- Panel Members with potential conflicts of interest are identified prior to the Panel Meeting and excluded from the discussions and scoring for the application to which they are conflicted. Sponsors are expected to notify the NC3Rs of any conflicts not identified by the Office ahead of Panel Meetings.