UK Research and Innovation

Addressing COVID-19 challenges with Japanese researchers

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	**Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**, **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**
Co-funders:	Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£3,000,000
Award range:	£350,000 - £425,000
Publication date:	21 April 2021
Opening date:	21 April 2021
Closing date:	14 July 2021 09:00 UK time

Last updated: 20 April 2021

Apply for funding for a social sciences, arts or humanities research project. This must be in collaboration with Japanese researchers.

You must be a UK researcher based at an eligible research organisation.

We encourage you to address challenges and opportunities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of your proposal must be within **ESRC's remit** or **AHRC's remit**.

The full economic cost of the UK part of the project can be between £350,000 to £425,000. UKRI will fund 80% of this.

The Japanese part of the project can cost up to ¥30 million. This will be funded by JSPS.

Funding is for three years. We will fund between eight and 10 projects.

Who can apply

UK eligibility

UK applicants must be part of a UK research organisation eligible for UKRI funding.

Check if your organisation is eligible.

The principal investigator of the UK component must be:

- a UK-based researcher
- of postdoctoral level or higher.

Please note that applicants cannot apply to be a principal investigator on more than one application to this funding opportunity.

Applications must be within either **ESRC's** or **AHRC's** remit. Interdisciplinary applications that cut across both ESRC and AHRC's remit are welcome.

What do we mean by early career researchers?

Both UKRI and JSPS encourage applicants to involve early career researchers in their activities. However, UKRI and JSPS have different rules about who qualifies as an early career researcher under this scheme. For JSPS, this may include doctoral and master's students that are sufficiently capable and experienced to carry out the research.

UKRI, however, cannot fund doctoral studentships or master's students through this scheme. UKRI can fund post-doctoral students and does not place any age limit or timebound definition on who qualifies as an early career researcher in recognition of the increasing diversity of career trajectories.

For the purposes of this scheme, UKRI defines an early career researcher as someone who has yet to make the transition to being an independent researcher (e.g. someone who has not yet had an opportunity to lead a research project in their own right.)

If you have any questions about this please contact UKRI's call mailbox: **UKRIJSPScall@esrc.ukri.org**.

Japanese eligibility

NB: please direct any questions about Japanese eligibility to your Japanese collaborators who can contact JSPS directly.

Japanese PI eligibility: Japanese principal investigators must be researchers affiliated with a university or research institution in Japan that are specified in Article 2 of the Procedures on the Handling of Grands-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI)*, issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). They must be eligible to apply for a KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid.

As the principal investigator (PI) takes overall responsibility for and plays a vital role in carrying out the project plan, care should be taken not to appoint a person to the position who might lose his or her PI eligibility. They must not be otherwise unable to perform the PI's duties during the full period of the project's implementation.

* Institutions specified as eligible in Article 2 of the procedures on handling of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research:

1) Universities and interuniversity research institutions
2) MEXT-affiliated institutions engaged in research
3) Colleges of technology
4) Institutions designated by the Minister of MEXT

Eligibility of the Japanese Participants (co-investigators)

The Japanese PI may organize a research team with researchers who are conducting research at a university or research institution in Japan (limited as a rule to the institutions specified in four points outlined above).

Participants may include doctoral and master's students who are sufficiently capable and experienced to carry out the research and emeritus professors. However, undergraduate students are not eligible to participate.

What we're looking for

The ESRC and AHRC of the UK and the JSPS, are pleased to invite high quality social science, arts and humanities proposals between UK and Japanese researchers. The total UK budget for this opportunity is £3 million.

UK applicants may request between £350,000 to £425,000 (100% full economic cost) per project. If successful, UKRI will meet 80% of the full economic costs and the host institution is expected to support the remaining 20%.

The total Japanese budget for this opportunity is ¥300m. Japanese applicants may request up to ¥30m per project over 3 years (up to ¥10m per year). Together we expect to fund up to ten joint proposals for a period of three years.

Successful projects will be expected to begin in December 2021.

Background to funding agencies and collaboration

ESRC and AHRC are part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and are, respectively, the largest funders of social science, and arts and humanities research in the UK. UKRI is eager to support the UK research community in expanding its global engagement. Japan has been identified as a partner of choice and a focus of investment for UKRI.

Analysis of co-publication data from Scopus has shown that where UK and Japanese researchers work together in and across the social sciences and arts

and humanities (SSH), the research that they produce is of the highest quality.

In addition, a UK-Japan networking opportunity (launched in 2018), focused on improving the connectivity between UK and Japanese SSH research communities, proved exceptionally popular and offered further evidence of the appetite for collaboration within these communities.

With this in mind, UKRI is eager to capitalise on the collaboration opportunities between the two countries through this joint opportunity with JSPS.

The JSPS carries out international joint research programs to advance collaborative research between excellent researchers in Japanese universities and institutes and their overseas colleagues, while providing opportunities for early career researchers to hone their skills.

These programs are carried out in cooperation with overseas science-promotion organizations so as to respond to the global development of scientific research activities.

Opportunity scope

This initiative will provide funding for high-quality collaborative research projects between UK and Japanese researchers which contribute to advancing impacts for the benefit of both countries.

UKRI and JSPS are keen to support collaboration between researchers and teams in areas of mutual strength and shared interest. Proposals must have a majority focus within **ESRC's** or **AHRC's** remits to be eligible.

Whilst this opportunity is open across the entire breadth of the social sciences, arts and humanities, we are particularly interested in proposals that acknowledge the current global context in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and aim to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic.

For example, this might include proposals that aim to contribute towards:

- improving policy, communication and service design post-COVID
- speeding up recovery and reducing costs and long-term scarring
- influencing the direction of recovery towards more equitable, inclusive, sustainable and resilient cultures, communities and societies.

This list is not exhaustive.

Proposals should also:

- consider how to make the best use of available expertise in the UK and Japan, together with the added value of new or existing collaborations
- demonstrate evidence of the strength and complementary of their collaboration and how the partnership will be managed
- consider how they can provide opportunities for early career researchers to participate in order to enable long term collaboration beyond the lifetime of any project.

Capacity building

We will be looking for evidence of a strong commitment to supporting the development of researchers at all stages of their career and capacity-building. This will be expected to include a strong career development programme shaped to suit the stage of the researchers' career and providing increased opportunities for professional development.

This should include, but not be limited to, the early career stage. You are encouraged to consider how you can support the career development of all members of the team.

The focus should be on the quality and impact of the research, and how increasing capacity contributes to this. Examples of building capacity include:

- support and mentoring
- management and leadership.

Including impact in research grant proposals

We expect applicants to consider the potential scientific, societal, cultural and economic impacts of their research, with outputs, dissemination and impact a key part of the criteria for most peer review and assessment processes.

It is important, therefore, to set out how you intend to identify and actively engage relevant users of the research and stakeholders (within and beyond the academic community including, for instance, the public sector, private sector, civil society or the wider public in general.)

You must include evidence of any existing engagement with relevant end users. You should articulate a clear understanding of the context and needs of these users and consider ways for the proposed research to meet or impact upon these needs.

The proposal should also outline how the legacy of proposed activity will be managed to engage beneficiaries and increase the likelihood of its impact in providing lasting value to participants, stakeholders and wider social science, arts and humanities communities.

Opportunities for making an impact may arise, and should be taken, at any stage during the research lifecycle:

- the planning and research design stage
- the period of funding
- all activities that relate to the project up to – and including – the time when funding has ended.

The research lifecycle therefore includes knowledge exchange and impact realisation activities – including reporting and publication, and the archiving, future use, sharing, and linking of data.

It is important that researchers have in place a robust strategy for maximising the likelihood of impact opportunities and their own capacity for taking advantage of

these.

To be effective, all communication, engagement and impact activities must be planned in detail and properly resourced in the proposal. Throughout the relevant sections of the research proposal, applicants should therefore actively consider how these impacts can be maximised and developed.

Applicants should also note the **COVID-19 guidance for applicants: accounting for the unknown impacts of COVID-19 (ESRC)**.

How to apply

You and your Japanese collaborator must submit a single joint application to JSPS, using the application form.

Download the application form (Word).

UK applicants should liaise with their lead Japanese collaborator as they are responsible for coordinating this submission. Please advise them to follow JSPS' guidance on the submission process and to contact JSPS directly if they have any questions about this.

Please do not submit anything to UKRI.

Please note that as part of the application to JSPS applicants are required to submit a UK costing template (which is available on JSPS' application portal) detailing all of the costs being requested from UKRI for the UK components of the project. This document represents the justification of resources attachment normally associated with applications to UKRI.

The deadline for submission is 14 July 2021 at 09:00 UK time (17:00 JST.) Please note the lead Japanese PI's institution may set an earlier deadline so we recommend discussing this with them in advance.

Please note that under no circumstances will JSPS accept applications submitted after the deadline, and once an application is submitted you will not be able to revise or resubmit it.

Find out more about **how to apply (JSPS)**.

If you're successful

If your application is chosen for funding, you'll be asked to submit your application in the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S.)

This is so UKRI can administer your funding through Je-S. Your application will not be reassessed.

This must be done by the end of November 2021.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

The assessment process is conducted in two stages:

1. A document review (meaning peer review) led by JSPS's International Programme Committee. Each application will be screened or reviewed by six document reviewers. **See more details on the document review (JSPS)**.

2. A joint assessment panel involving both UK and Japanese experts from the social sciences, arts and humanities will evaluate proposals against the assessment criteria (outlined below.)

We aim to notify the applicants of final funding decisions in October 2021.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria are used in the assessment process:

- academic excellence of projects – what is the potential for the proposed activity to advance knowledge and understanding and new insights within its own field or across different fields?
- necessity of cooperation, added value gained, and mutual research advancement through transfer of knowledge and expertise
- broader impacts: does the proposal demonstrate the contribution that this project will make to society and/or to the pursuit of advancing academic inquiry? (Examples include but are not limited to improving the quality of life, contributing to socioeconomic development, solving prevailing social issues, or passing on and advancing culture)
- participation of early career researchers and contribution to fostering them
- sufficient negotiation having clearly been carried out between the UK and Japanese research teams before submitting the application (meaning a well-coordinated partnership with clear plans to manage collaboration). Feasibility and coherence of the research plan.

In addition to the above criteria, the following points are also considered:

- a detailed path within the research plan for achieving the project objectives
- appropriateness of the budget plan/value for money.

Contact details

For further details please contact: **ukrijspscall@esrc.ukri.org**

If you have any questions about the Japanese component of this opportunity please contact: **bottom-up@jsps.go.jp**

Any queries regarding the submission of proposals should be directed towards JSPS, and we recommend liaising with your lead Japanese collaborator about this.

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

Additional info

Please note that as part of the application process applicants are required to submit a UK costing template (which is part of the main application form on JSPS' application portal) detailing all of the costs being requested from UKRI for the UK components of the project.

This document represents the Justification of Resources attachment normally associated with applications to UKRI.

UKRI will also require successful UK applicants to submit a data management plan, which among other things includes the types and uses of data acquired during joint research, responses to ethical and legal issues, handling of intellectual property rights, and plans for data storage, sharing, and reuse.

This will be communicated to successful applicants after the review process is complete.

Timeline

○ **21 April 2021**
Opening date

○ **14 July 2021**
Closing date (09:00 UK time, 17:00 JST)

○ **October 2021**
Final funding decision

○ **November 2021**
Record successful applications in Je-S

○ **December 2021**
Project start date