

EPSRC funding opportunity

Research in terahertz technologies and systems

Webinar Q&A and frequently asked questions

26 September 2024

Webinar Q&A

Q. Can we give sub-headings under the main sections, such as Vision, Approach, etc.?

Yes, you are free to structure the application however you like, as long as all the information requested is well detailed and evidenced in the application.

Q. You appreciate that no funding for German partners is not a sustainable model for establishing a joint proposal. It seems that the subcontracting could be a solution to provide resources to the German partner and engage with the project. What is the acceptable level of funding a subcontract could include? How could this impact the review outcome?

There is no set limit or quota for subcontracted funds specified for this opportunity. Funding requested should be appropriate to the team and the proposed programme of work – any funds requested via subcontract must be clearly justified and benefits clearly evidenced.

Q. Could you clarify more on if researchers based in Germany can be funded, and under which conditions?

German researchers can be involved and funded through the grant in different ways:

- Visiting researchers - Support may be requested for visits by scientists and engineers of acknowledged standing (lecturer level or above, or same level of experience) from within the UK or abroad to the investigator's organisation but only as part of a larger research proposal. Funding is limited to 12 months per individual. The research organisation should include estate costs and indirect costs for any visiting researcher regardless of whether the support being requested includes a salary contribution or is only travel and subsistence.
- Project partners - normally project partners cannot receive funding directly from the grant. The two exceptions to this are:
 - where a project partner is providing services or equipment that will go through a formal procurement process audited by the host research organisation
 - the project partner can receive small amounts of funding from the grant, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified.

Please note that international universities can also be listed in the grant as project partners.

Finally, research staff/PDRA from Germany can be recruited by UK research organisation for UKRI grants. In this case visa fees can be covered by the grant, but research staff must be based in the UK for the duration of the project.

Please remember that the project co-lead (international) role applies exclusively to [UKRI and Research Council of Norway Money Follows Cooperation agreement](#), and can only be used to include co-leads from Norway. This cannot be used to include co-leads from Germany in this funding opportunity.

Q. Are there any expectations or limitations around proposals from a consortium of UK universities? (i.e. providing funding to more than one UK institution). How should such proposals be made? (Lead institution + sub-contract?)

UK consortia can apply as lead/co-leads in the same way as in standard funding opportunities (one project lead, and multiple co-leads from multiple UK institutions).

International partners need to be included in the grant as project partners/subcontractors through standard subcontract process, or visiting researchers.

Q. You mentioned that the proposal should demonstrate how the applicant(s) will build on their existing expertise in the area. Does this represent a subtle change, as previously building on an established base was typically regarded as "incremental" and therefore not fundable?

The change can be incremental, but you must provide clear evidence of impact by the end of the project.

Q. Can the partner be a German company, or it must be in an academic setting?

Project partners can be any type of organisation, such as academic, industrial, policy, third sector, NGO or individuals.

Q. Can there be more than one German project partner?

Yes.

Q. Is there any conflict to be subcontractor and partner at the same time?

Project partners cannot normally receive funding directly from the grant. However, partners may receive funds via subcontract where they are providing services or equipment essential to the research in the application. This is sometimes referred to as the project partner playing a "dual role".

If you are requesting funds to be delivered via subcontract to a project partner, you must clearly justify why the work is essential to the research. All subcontracted services, including those provided by project partners, **must** through a formal procurement process audited by the UK host research organisation.

For more information please see [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)

Q. You mentioned a small amount of funds can be available for German partners. What sort of level of funding do you consider small and what can it be used for?

Project partners can receive small amounts of funding from the grant, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified.

Q. Can you confirm that you required the visiting researchers to be employed by UK institutions?

No, visiting researchers must continue to be employed at their home institution. The only restrictions on visiting researchers are:

- A visiting researcher is not employed by **the lead organisation** or any of **the collaborating organisation**.
- A visiting researcher carries out research or innovation work (or both) on the project for a limited period of time.

For more information please visit [Roles in funding applications: eligibility, responsibilities and costings guidance – UKRI](#)

Q. If the proposal is unsuccessful, is it allowed to be resubmitted for another call (e.g. standard research)?

The [EPSRC policy on resubmissions](#) applies to this opportunity.

Q. Will a failure count as a black mark?

This question refers to the EPSRC [Repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy](#). The policy is currently paused until further notice, so will not be enforced for this opportunity.

Frequently asked questions

Q. When will outcomes be announced?

The panel assessment is expected to take place in February 2025. Outcomes are expected to be communicated by the end of March 2025.

Q. When can my project start?

Projects must commence no later than June 2025. Projects will be funded for three years.

Q. How will the applications be assessed?

We will invite experts to provide written reviews for your applications. You will have the opportunity to provide a written response to the reviews. The same set of experts will be invited to use the evidence and your applicant response to assess the quality of your application during a panel meeting. The panel will rank submitted applications and make a funding recommendation. EPSRC has funding to support the three highest-ranking applications.

The panel will comprise of independent experts in the THz research space selected by EPSRC. We are aiming to have representation from both the UK and Germany at the panel.

Q. What is in scope?

The proposed research should advance UK knowledge in THz systems and gain new insights in the area of materials, electronics and photonics. The majority of the research should fall within the THz remit and focus on development of novel technologies. A wide range of focal areas are in scope, and the applications can be in any domain.

Potential focal areas include:

- new physical phenomena technologies and devices
- multi-functional integrated systems
- fundamental THz science, extension of theory, modelling
- system-integratable sources and local oscillators
- development of detectors
- on-chip integration
- integrated time-domain and frequency-domain systems for imaging and spectroscopy
- THz time-domain quantum optics
- hollow core/other fibres for communications or other applications
- other relevant areas

Q. Can I be involved in multiple applications as a project lead?

You can be a project lead on no more than **one** application. You may be involved in multiple applications as project-co lead. Please ensure you would have capacity to be involved in multiple projects if more than one is selected for funding. EPSRC are planning to fund three projects from this funding opportunity.

Q. Can I be a project partner on multiple applications?

An organisation is free to be a partner on multiple projects, as long as they are confident that they would have capacity to support multiple projects if more than one is selected for funding. EPSRC are planning to fund three projects from this funding opportunity.

Q. What is the relationship between this programme and the DFG INTEREST programme?

The funding opportunities are thematically aligned, and both focus on collaboration between the UK and Germany. Collaborators from DFG have had input on the EPSRC funding opportunity scope. The EPSRC funding opportunity is independent of the INTEREST programme, and the assessment process for the two programmes is completely separate.

Q. Can UKRI fund researchers based in Germany?

Individuals based in any other non-UK countries, including Germany, can be involved in the grant as [visiting researchers](#), [project partners](#), or members of advisory boards. However, they are not eligible to be project leads or co-leads, and German institutions cannot receive direct funding for e.g. staff, equipment or estates costs from UKRI in the same way as UK-based staff.

UKRI grants can request visa fees if they wish to recruit research staff from abroad, including Germany. These individuals must be based in the UK for the duration of the project.

Q. Can my German collaborators be included as international project co-leads?

No. The “project co-lead (international)” role is only applicable to investigators from Norway under the [UKRI and Research Council of Norway Money Follows Cooperation agreement](#). German collaborators may be involved in the project as [visiting researchers](#), [project partners](#), or members of advisory boards.

Q. What is a project partner? Can project partners receive funds?

The EPSRC definition of a project partner is “a collaborating organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include cash or in-kind contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.”

If members of German institutions are included on the grant as project partners, small amounts of the grant funding can be used to cover minor project partner costs, such travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. This would not usually include costs for project partner staff time. Any costs requested for project partners will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified in the application.

Project partners may also sometimes receive funds via subcontract if they are providing services or equipment for a specific activity – all costs allocated in this way must go through a formal procurement process audited by the UK host research organisation, as with any subcontract. There’s more detail on our website around [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)