Japan-UK joint call for collaborations in advancing human-centred AI FAQs

Q: What does the £1.5 million available specifically cover?

A: The maximum that can be requested for each project by UK applicants is £1.5 million; this is the amount EPSRC will fund the project to cover up to 80% full economic cost (FEC) for UK researchers and must be shared by all UK institutions involved in the bid. Note that the FEC can be higher than £1.5 million, but EPSRC will only fund up to £1.5 million. Funds for Japan partners (up to ¥280 million) will be provided by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).

Q: I couldn't attend the webinar on 25/03/25. Can I access a recording and the slides?

A: The webinar slides can be found on the funding opportunity. A recording is not available.

Q: Can individuals from multiple institutions in the UK and/or Japan apply together?

A: Yes! Partnerships between institutions are welcomed in this funding opportunity. You will need to agree on who will be the lead organisation and the different roles each member of the team will have. Further guidance on how to get set up on the funding service is available on our site also.

Q: Can a researcher be listed as PI or Co-I on multiple applications?

A: This is allowed for UK-based applicants, but candidates are encouraged to consider how they would balance their commitments if multiple applications they are involved in are accepted. Please review guidance from JST on requirements for Japan-based applicants.

Q: How do I access this opportunity for JST and Japan applicants?

A: Details relevant to Japan-based applicants can be found on JST's website.

Q: What is the scientific remit scope for this opportunity?

A: Proposals related to the research topics listed on the call site are encouraged, but submissions are not limited to these areas.

Proposals must be within the remit of the AI and Robotics Team within EPSRC. This funding opportunity seeks to support novel development of technologies. If your proposed work is the application of novel technologies, you will need to make a case why this is of relevance to this call.

Q: What information is needed for the prior notice required for project partners in Japan?

A: Prior notice requests the following information and for information available on JST website:

Name, affiliation, position and e-mail address of the Japan-based PI. Name, affiliation, position of the UK PL. Tentative proposal title

Applicants are encouraged to submit before 8th May.

Q: Can interdisciplinary co-investigators be included?

A: Yes, we recognise the cross-cutting utility of human-centred AI and accept inclusion of multidisciplinary teams and proposals where appropriate. However, projects must still constitute research with >50% EPSRC remit to be considered for this opportunity.

Q: Who can apply?

A: Any UK applicant who works at an eligible organisation and meets the eligibility requirements can apply. Japan applicants must meet JST eligibility criteria. Further advice for Japan applicants can be found in JST's applicant guidance.

Q: Who is eligible to be an outgoing researcher? Do they need to be named in the application?

A: For Japan-based applicants only, the researchers going abroad should either be students enrolled in an advanced degree course (that is, master's or doctoral course) or researchers who have obtained their final degree less than 15 years ago and are conducting research activities at universities, public research institutions, and so on

Students who are enrolled in a master's course, doctoral course or transitioned to a postdoctoral researcher position upon completion of their doctoral course are required to obtain prior approval from the project principal investigator or co-principal investigator and the research institution to which they belong to in order to use ASPIRE funds.

The outgoing researchers will be expected to conduct research activities in the UK for approximately one year. There is no limit to the number of researchers who may go abroad, outgoing researchers can include the principal investigator, co-principal investigator or research participants of the project.

For UK applicants only, outgoing researchers from the UK to Japan can include those assigned roles from the list below included in the core team:

- project lead (PL)
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- specialist
- professional enabling staff
- research and innovation associate
- technician
- visiting researcher
- researcher co-lead (RcL)

If the outgoing researcher is known, a name can be provided. Otherwise, it is not necessary to provide a name.

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Q: Is the emphasis on building collaborative networks or producing high quality research?

A: There should be elements of both. It will be up to the applicants to determine what is the best mix and how best to present it.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of applications an organisation can submit?

A: There is not a limit on number of applications from an organisation, please see the funding opportunity for details on eligibility.

Q: There are 4 target research areas, and 4 applications will be funded. Does this mean one application for each area will receive funding?

A: No, while we encourage applications from the target research areas, funding will be awarded based purely on the quality of applications.

Q: Can applications include industrial partners?

A: Yes, projects partners are allowed on applications. However, industry partners must contribute monetarily or in kind to be considered in an application.

Q: Can workshops and outreach activities use funds from this call?

A: Workshops and outreach activities can be included in applications. It is for the applicant team to consider what activities should be included in their work plan to achieve the expected outcomes of the funding opportunity. Applicants should also consider how they could utilise or partner with existing workshop and outreach activities in the wider AI ecosystem.

Q: Is an existing collaboration with partners in Japan/UK required?

A: Applicant teams can be made of existing collaborators or new collaborators between the UK and Japan. It is important that those involved in the application have the expertise and skillset required to deliver the proposed work.

Q: Will applications be reviewed by JST and EPSRC reviewers?

A: Applications will be reviewed by peers in the community selected by EPSRC and reviewers nominated by JST. The prioritisation panel will be made up of members selected by EPSRC and JST.

Q: Will this call run again?

A: There are currently no plans to run this opportunity again.

Q: Does the human-computer interactions (HCI) theme relate to HCI technologies that interact with AI systems, or HCI systems that employ AI within its interface, or both?

A: Either; this is a broad theme. However, the emphasis should be on the development of novel AI as detailed in EPSRC's artificial intelligence technologies area of investment support.

Q: Is in kind contribution eligible for making up the full economic cost (FEC) of UK funding?

A: No.

Q: Do exchanges get funded as travel expenses?

A: Yes, this should be costed under directly incurred costs.

Q: Does the project have to be for 5 years?

A: For Japan-based applicants the project duration must be exactly 5 years, for UK-based applicants it can be up to 5 years. Shorter projects should have a comparatively smaller FEC.