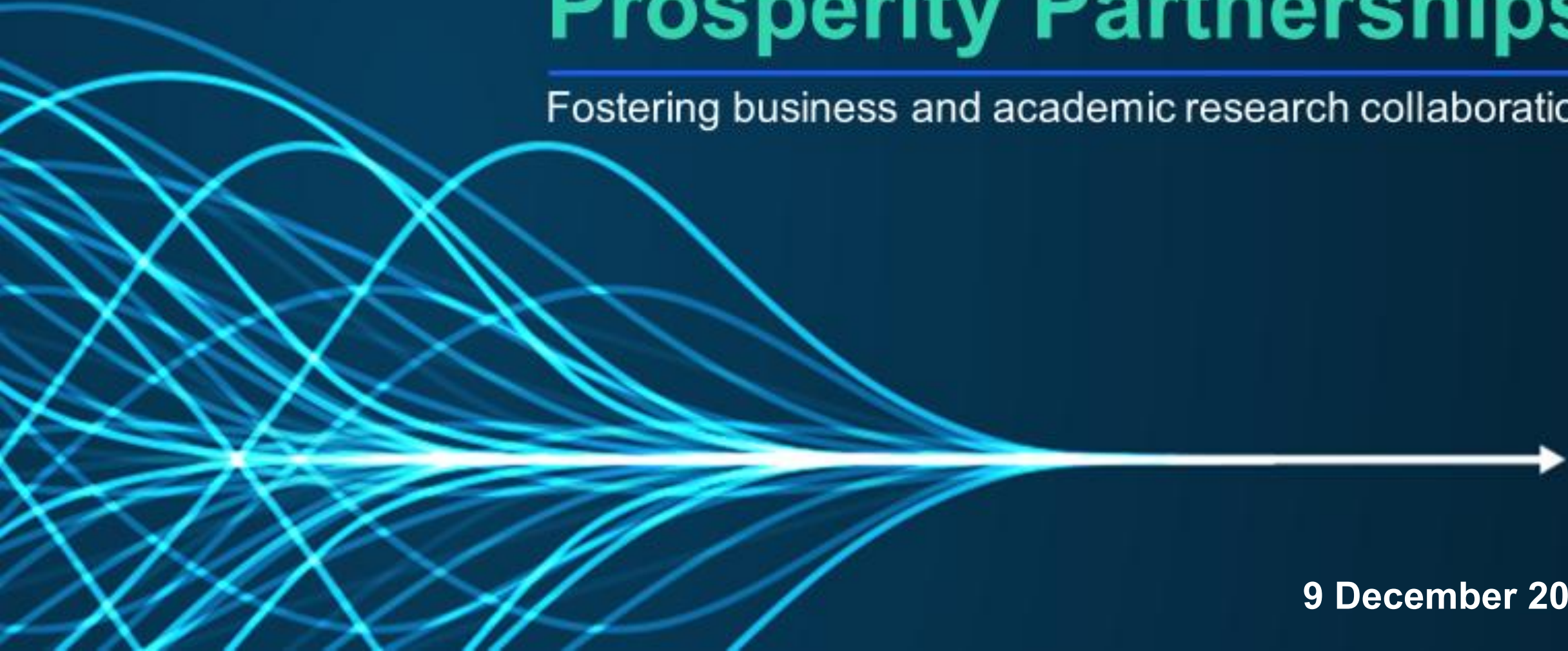




Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Prosperity Partnerships

Fostering business and academic research collaboration



9 December 2025

# Welcome to the webinar

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- This webinar is intended to help you better understand the opportunity EPSRC Prosperity Partnerships 2027
- The pre-announcement for this opportunity was published in November 2025 and can be visited here:  
<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/epsrc-prosperity-partnerships-2027/>
- The slides and the recording of the webinar will be made publicly available on the opportunity page



# Clarification

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- We will not be able to confirm or provide any additional details beyond what is included in the pre-announcement, as these will be part of the full opportunity to be launched in February 2026
- We want to ensure that potential applicants are not disadvantaged if they were unable to attend today's session
- We ask that you please wait to submit questions until the presentation is finished
- We will not be discussing or providing any information regarding the assessment process



# What this webinar will cover

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- Overview of the opportunity
- Project features
- Eligibility as a primary business partner
- Eligibility as a primary academic partner
- Additional partners
- Why should businesses get involved
- Matched contributions

■ Q & A





# Overview of opportunity

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- Up to £40m to support ambitious, collaborative research programmes which are co-created and co-delivered by established business and academic partners
- By investing in these projects, we aim to create long-term prosperity for the UK
- The business cash contribution must at least match the amount funded by EPSRC
- Projects will start in first half of 2027



# Project features

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- Prosperity Partnerships are collaborative research partnerships that focus on important industry challenges
- Applications should feature world-leading, fundamental engineering and physical sciences research which creates long-term prosperity for the UK
- Projects should generate significant impacts by creating new knowledge, innovations, approaches, or technologies
- It should be clear that both the business and academic researchers are making distinct intellectual contributions to the partnership
- We will prioritise applications which can demonstrate clear strategic alignment to UK national priorities such as the The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025 and the associated sector plans, or other similarly prominent and current national strategies



# Why Should Businesses Get Involved?

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- Cost and risk sharing
  - UKRI is paying 50% of the project costs. This funding significantly de-risks long-term, high-risk R&D investment and enables you to solve problems which you might have otherwise been unable to address alone
- Commercialisation
  - While you can't have exclusive rights to the IP, typically your collaboration agreements will give you a royalty-free license to the technology/outputs
- Know-how
  - by being part of the project, your business can develop practical knowledge which can give you a significant head start and speed up the time to bring the idea to market



# Why Should Businesses Get Involved?

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- Workforce and supply chain development
  - involvement will also give a head start in securing skilled people and developing the supply chain to be ready for scaling up in the future
- Strategic access and influencing
  - Directly strengthen your access to top university researchers and publicly funded facilities
  - Potential to influence regulation and standards – government co-funded projects can often be a way to impact future standards and regulatory frameworks for your industry
  - Positioning in the marketplace – engaging in these projects can help position your business as a leader in the relevant area and it can support your government procurement or investment goals





# Overview of opportunity changes

Previous Calls	PP 2027
Split application routes for smaller and larger projects	Single route. Applications can be any size from £500,000 and up.
Minimum 5 year partnership for larger projects, minimum 1 year partnership for smaller projects.	Minimum 1 year partnership.  Shorter/less-established partnerships are expected to apply for smaller grants  Larger grant applications will need to give strong evidence of an established partnership  Assessment panel will judge whether the amount requested is appropriate
Open remit across all EPSRC topics, occasionally with a highlight on specific topics	Open remit across EPSRC topics. No highlight. Expectation that projects will aim to create long-term prosperity for the UK.
Funding decisions based on ranked order and funding available	Funding decisions based on a combination of quality banding, funding available and portfolio balance
Lack of clarity in wording about eligibility of business partners	Clear and precise wording about eligibility



# Can I be a primary academic partner?

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Research organisations can act as the 'primary academic partner' if they are eligible to receive EPSRC funding.

This includes:

- UK higher education institutions
- Research Council Institutes
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)-approved independent research organisations
- public sector research establishments
- NHS bodies with research capacity
- The primary academic partner will be required to create and submit the application on the UKRI Funding Service



# Can I be a primary business partner?

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Businesses can act as the 'primary business partner' if they meet **at least one** of the following requirements:

- be a UK-based business of any size
- be a business of any size with a UK presence and significant UK-based research activity
- be a public sector research establishment (PRSE), noting that your financial contribution to the project must not be derived from public funds (appropriate confirmation and assurance of this will be required)
- be the lead of a consortium of organisations which collectively contributes the match funding, the members of which meet any of the above requirements

Collaborations may include international partners, noting that the match funding must be contributed by a partner or consortium meeting the above definitions. All partners are expected to be involved in the creation of your application



# Additional Project Partners

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- Projects may include any number of additional business or academic partners. These are termed “non-primary business partners” or “non-primary academic partners”
- Non-primary business partners may contribute to the match funding requirement
- This means consortia of any size are allowed
- An established relationship between the two primary partners still needs to be demonstrated





# What we mean by established partnership

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- This opportunity will support collaborative partnerships between the primary partner organisations which have been established for at least one year.
- A partnership is a working relationship between the two individuals who will lead the project in both organisations, as well as a broader relationship between the two organisations.
- An established partnership in this context is one which meets all the following requirements:
  - has individual relationships at the core of the partnership
  - can be recognised by both primary partner organisations
  - can demonstrate a track record of at least one year showing significant, regular collaborative research projects which the primary academic and business partners have developed and completed together
  - can demonstrate a clear trajectory for future collaborative work



# Matched contribution

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- EPSRC funding model is 80% fEC (full economic cost) which means we will fund 80% of the amount applied for, and the remaining 20% is covered by the academic partner(s)
- If there is a single primary business partner named in the application, then they must provide a cash contribution which at least matches the EPSRC funding
- In-kind contributions will not count towards this cash component but are encouraged
- Consortium of businesses- led by a primary business partner  
The combined cash contributions from all the business partners must at least match the EPSRC funding requested. The value of the primary business partner's cash contribution must be the greatest among business partners on this application



Research organisation agrees to find the remaining 20% balance of the full economic cost from other resources.

Full economic cost of research grant proposal

EPSRC will provide 80% of the full economic costs

Industry partner(s) will at least match the EPSRC funding with cash contribution

Industry match funding can be composed of multiple contributions – but the primary industry partner must make the **greatest single contribution**

# Definitive list of eligible cash contributions

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Researchers' salaries</b></li><li>▪ <b>Professional enabling staff salaries</b></li><li>▪ <b>Software licences</b></li><li>▪ <b>New equipment</b></li><li>▪ <b>Access to equipment and facilities</b></li><li>▪ <b>Business cash donation</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Research and innovation associates' salaries</b></li><li>• <b>Specialists' and technicians' salaries</b></li><li>• <b>Equipment produced by the business</b></li><li>• <b>Equipment-specific materials</b></li><li>• <b>Facilities refurbishment</b></li></ul> |
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# Internal investment as a cash contribution

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- Internal investments could be eligible IF they are being made specifically for the project.
- The key is to demonstrate additionality. The match contribution needs to be "cash" and fall under one of the categories in the defined list of cash contributions in the opportunity text.
- Outside of that additional in-kind contributions are allowed such as data, software, management time, or facilities access are welcome and can help show business commitment to the success of the project. However, they will not count towards the industry matching contributions.



# Key dates

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- Opportunity launches Early February 2026
- Opportunity closes see full opportunity
- Full opportunity webinar March 2026 (register when opportunity opens)



# Q&A

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## Is it single stage?

There is no outline stage. Once the opportunity opens, full applications will be submitted by the deadline.



# Q&A

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## Is visiting researcher eligible to apply?

Principal investigators should hold a permanent post or a fixed term post covering the duration of the project.





# Q&A

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**Does this opportunity consider the different levels of academics e.g. ECR, MCR etc?**

Yes - the project should be led by the most appropriate person and this needs to be justified why they are the most appropriate person. When it comes to demonstrating the established relationship, it is about the strength of the relationship between the people and between the two organisations, not about the seniority of the people involved. You should provide the best possible evidence for the strength of your relationship.



# Q&A

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## What are the larger/largest grant size you will consider?

EPSRC funds fundamental research that falls within TRL 1-3. We will have up to £40m of funding available. Less established partnerships should be asking for smaller scale projects. Larger grant applications should demonstrate a strongly established relationship. Applications should be costed based on what is required to undertake the research, including appropriate plans for impact etc. If you would like to look at past examples of projects, visit [Gateway To Research](#).



# Q&A

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**Do the SME partners still need to contribute cash even if the academic partner's total grant request is £500K, which is the minimum UKRI requires us to request?**

**Business match funding via cash contribution is part of the opportunity eligibility.** SME's involvement could be as a sole primary business partner, or as part of a consortium. If there is a single primary business partner named in the application, then they must provide a cash contribution which at least matches the EPSRC funding. If an SME is involved as part of the consortium led by the primary business partner, the combined cash contributions from all the business partners must at least match the EPSRC funding requested. The value of the primary business partner's cash contribution must be the greatest among business partners on this application.



# Q&A

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## Can an academic who is co-founder of a start-up company propose a project that includes both the university and the company?

Spin-out companies are eligible to apply as a primary business partner provided that they are able to at least match the EPSRC funding and have an established relationship with the academic partner.

However, please be aware of the specifics around spin-out companies participating in Prosperity Partnerships projects as outlined in the pre-announcement: **It is important to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest.** You must declare in your application if any member of your project leadership team has paid positions within both the business and research organisation partnering on the same project. If this is the case, you must also clarify the separation of duties and how you will manage the potential conflicts of interest.





# Q&A

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**Can preparatory work will be considered a cash contribution even though it would begin before the official start of a programme?**

Cash contributions must be part of the funded project duration. "Preparatory work" is considered to be part of establishing the relationship with the primary business partner prior to a potential prosperity partnership and **cannot be used** as cash contribution retrospectively.



# Q&A

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**Could you please expand a bit to clarify the funding requirement/eligibility for SMEs vs academic institutions?**

SME's are eligible to apply only as a primary business partner or additional business partner.



# Q&A

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**Can two academic partners join forces to lead the proposal from the academic side with the support of a consortium of companies leading the proposal from the industrial side?**

No, there can only be **one** primary academic/business partner. Any other partners are considered additional.



# Q&A

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## **Would a membership organisation count as a consortium?**

A consortium is a collaborative association formed by multiple entities. Membership organisation can be part of a consortium; however they will require a primary business partner to lead the consortium and to contribute the largest sum of cash contributions as part of the match funding requirement.



# Q&A

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**Will PhD studentship costs be an eligible cost in this call?**

PhD Studentships costs are NOT eligible in this call.





# Q&A

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## Are Non-Departmental Public Bodies eligible?

NPDB's can be part of a project as non-primary business partners. If a NPDB is aiming to contribute cash towards the match funding requirement, it is required that the money **must not** derive from public funding (appropriate evidence will be required).

The same applies if a NDPB wishes to be a primary business partner.



# Q&A

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## What is the definition of 'UK presence' for the Primary Business Partner?

If you are not a UK-based business, we expect you to be a business with a UK presence and significant UK-based research activity. You will be required to evidence this in your application. The project should be primarily based in the UK. If you are a global company, you do not have to do all the work in the UK, but we would expect a substantial proportion to be.

Be prepared to defend your eligibility and put yourself in the position of someone judging your application - does what you have presented amount to "significant UK-based research activity"?



# Q&A

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**Do all the business partners in a consortium have to have had at least one year strategic engagement with the academic partner?**

This opportunity will support collaborative partnerships between the **primary partner organisations** which have been established for at least one year. Therefore, additional partners do not have to have an established partnership in place, although it is encouraged.



# Thank you

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**Please speak to your research office if you have any queries, or contact [prosperitypartnerships@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:prosperitypartnerships@epsrc.ukri.org)**

