



UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Full Call: Japan-UK Joint call for collaborations in Advanced Connectivity Technologies

Council or business area

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Aims and objectives

This partnership programme aims to support internationally competitive collaborative research projects between Japan and UK in the field of Advanced Connectivity Technologies.

This is a key investment through partnership between UK Research and Innovation's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (UKRI EPSRC) and the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT), with direct support from the UK's Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) to achieve the ambitions outlined in both the UK Government and Japan Government strategy.

Aspects that need to be covered by EIA:

- How people might be impacted by the Expression Of Interest (EOI) and Full Call stage
- Inclusive timelines

At EPSRC we are committed to ensuring that fairness is fully reflected in all our funding processes by advancing policy that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We aim to achieve this in three ways:

1. Evolving our approach to the peer review process to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible.
2. Maintaining a fair and flexible environment for all members of our community, regardless of individual circumstances.
3. Providing the means for researchers to confidentially inform EPSRC of personal circumstances and specific requirements so that we can discuss the potential ways to accommodate individual needs.

Further information about EPSRC’s approach to diversity and inclusion in our funding processes can be found here: [Evolving and upholding fairness in peer review – UKRI](#)

Who is affected?

- Individuals eligible to apply for this funding and others who may be employed using funding awarded as a result of this Call
- Project partners
- Businesses
- Wider beneficiaries
- Research office/institutions and staff
- UKRI staff running and involved with the opportunity, including EPSRC Future Communications Team

What data and consultation have you used?

- [EPSRC three-year EDI action plan: 2022 to 2025](#)
- [UKRI Diversity data for funding applicants and awardees 2020-21](#)
- The outputs of EDI evaluations and investigations we have conducted to date: [Evidence and analysis of EDI in EPSRC activities – UKRI](#)

Impact on specific groups

Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

Potential negative impact due to unconscious bias could occur to multiple groups of people. To address this, EPSRC will provide clear unconscious bias guidance at all assessment stages and apply the wider set of bias mitigation measures covered in [Evolving and upholding fairness in peer review – UKRI](#).

Impact on protected characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact



Age	No impact	There are no inherent or direct negative impacts relating to age in this activity.	<p>The diversity data collected on TFS is neither used during the assessment process nor used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>EPSRC will provide clear unconscious bias guidance at all assessment stages and apply the wider set of bias mitigation measures outlined in the 'general impacts on multiple groups' section to support a fair and inclusive review process.</p>
Disability	Potential negative	<p>Some applicants may face barriers such as accessibility issues or gaining research office support to apply.</p> <p>Reviewers and panel members may also face barriers related to a disability, which require reasonable adjustments (e.g. extended deadline for reviewer response, accessibility issues with TFS).</p>	<p>The Expression Of Interest is launched in advance of the Full Call launch to allow sufficient time for applicants to plan collaborations with Japanese counterparts.</p> <p>EPSRC will ensure that the funding opportunity guidance for applicants, reviewers and panel members is clear and accessible. Reasonable adjustments can be requested for applicants, reviewers and panel members where needed. We will enable applicants to seek clarification via the contacts provided on the funding opportunity webpage.</p> <p>If anyone needs accessibility support with TFS they can get in contact via email at: support@funding-service.ukri.org or call the UKRI Funding Service Helpline: +44 (0)1793 547 490</p> <p>EPSRC will ensure that the venue for the panel meeting will be accessible to panel members.</p>
Gender reassignment	No known impact	There are no inherent or direct negative impacts relating to gender reassignment in this activity.	Use inclusive language and ensure confidentiality in applicant data handling (which will not be used as part of the funding assessment or decision-making process anyway).



Marriage or civil partnership	No known impact	There are no inherent or direct negative impacts relating to marriage or civil partnership in this activity.	Use inclusive language and ensure confidentiality in applicant data handling (which will not be used as part of the funding assessment or decision-making process anyway).
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	Potential applicants who are on parental leave may have reduced opportunity to prepare proposals and would be unavailable at key assessment stages.	Applicants will have eight weeks to complete the Expression Of Interest. At the Full Call launch stage, the key dates will be published on the UKRI Funding Finder, allowing for early engagement with EPSRC on specific personal impact from applicants. EPSRC will have a point of contact applicants who need to discuss their specific requirements/queries.
Race	Potential negative	Underrepresentation of minoritised ethnic groups in EPSRC disciplines is a known issue	EPSRC is partnering with NICT-Japan for the first time. EPSRC will raise awareness of this new funding opportunity through targeted outreach to EDI networks, including those for minority ethnic researchers in STEM. EPSRC will provide clear unconscious bias guidance at all assessment stages and apply the wider set of bias mitigation measures outlined in the 'general impacts on multiple groups' section to support a fair and inclusive review process.
Religion or belief	Potential negative impact	People with certain religious beliefs may be negatively affected by the location and time of the panel meeting (time of day or time of year, due to religious festivals, prayer time etc). Religious practice may involve access to spaces for worship and appropriate washing facilities.	The timeline has been drawn up with due consideration of all religious festivals during the lifecycle of the activity. EPSRC will endeavour to avoid days of religious significance to enable participation from people of different faiths. EPSRC will have a point of contact for people who need to discuss their specific requirements/queries.



		Dietary requirements may need to be considered for panel members, for example, Halal, Kosher or vegan food.	
Sex	Potential negative	Women remain underrepresented in many EPSRC disciplines, and caring responsibilities disproportionately affect women. Menstrual health conditions and menopause can also cause similar barriers to having disability.	In line with EPSRC policies peer review processes will involve mixed gender. Maintain awareness of disciplinary imbalances and continue monitoring diversity data; continue to promote inclusive assessment practices and offer reasonable adjustments where needed.
Sexual orientation	No known impact	There are no inherent or direct negative impacts relating to sexual orientation in this activity as sexual orientation will not be known against specific individuals and not used in assessment	EPSRC will use inclusive language to ensure inclusion of same-sex couples. EPSRC will ensure benefits and rights are inclusive of different relationships.

Impact on additional characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Additional characteristics	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Geographical location and place	Potential negative	Applicants from smaller or less research-intensive institutions may experience disadvantage due to variation in research office support.	Reinforce research office responsibilities; ensure applicants know where to seek advice by signposting support routes clearly



Socio-economic status	No known impact	There is limited direct evidence of impact. Applicants with fewer institutional resources may benefit from clearer guidance and support expectations.	Ensure communications avoid assumptions about existing institutional support.
Education background	No known impact	N/A	N/A
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Negative impact	Applicants with childcare responsibilities may face constraints in preparing applications within fixed timeframes. Participation from, peer reviewers or panel members may be negatively impacted if they are unavailable at key assessment stages due to parental responsibilities.	Where possible EPSRC will aim to keep the application window open for an extended period to allow sufficient time for preparing proposals. At present the Call is open for 11 weeks. Where possible EPSRC will also aim to organise the timelines of funding opportunities outside of school holidays to enable full participation of people with caring responsibilities.
Carer responsibilities	Negative impact	Applicants with childcare responsibilities may face constraints in preparing applications within fixed timeframes.	Where possible EPSRC will aim to keep the call open for an extended period to allow sufficient time for preparing proposals and provide panel members the opportunity to attend virtually. At present the Call is open for 11 weeks.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	No known impact	N/A	N/A
Other characteristics	Negative impact	Applicants with overseas or international funding histories may face additional complexity navigating UKRI funding terminology in demonstrating eligibility, which may intersect with a range of applicant backgrounds.	Maintain clear guidance and enable applicants to seek clarification where needed.



Final decision

Make a decision on whether to proceed with the activity

State which one of the following outcomes applies and give a reason for your decision.

1. No negative or positive impact identified therefore, activity will proceed
2. **Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality**
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.
4. Barriers and impact identified, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity. Proceed with caution with this activity knowing the impact

There are possible impacts but in general this funding opportunity has a low risk of discriminating or unfairly disadvantaging anyone.

The activity has been adapted following the actions described in the previous section.

Review and sign off

How will you monitor and review the impact of your activity?

Lessons learned from the application period and the panel process will be captured and used to update the EIA where relevant.

What is the EIA review date?

23 June 2026

Contact

Dr Shiny Mathew, shiny.mathew@epsrc.ukri.org



Will the EIA be published?

Yes

Who has this been signed off by?

Maisie England, Head of Future Communication Systems, EPSRC

25/6/26

Submitting the form

You need to [submit the form to the central repository](#)

EIAs for the International Science Partnership Funds should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log

Include changes as you've reviewed the EIA. For example, based on input received from x at the announcement of opportunity stage, x was added

Name	Date	Version	Change
		1	
		2	
		3	

Action plan

Add the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the negative impact you have identified. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is the outcome?
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Review deadlines for Expression Of Interest and Full opportunity. Where possible EPSRC will aim to close the Expression Of Interest and the Full opportunity outside of: - school holidays to enable full participation of people with caring responsibilities and - religious holidays	July 2026	Funding opportunity lead	Expression Of Interest and Full opportunity deadlines to reflect any changes needed where possible.	Inform inclusive design of the activity where possible. Individual needs can be addressed.