



Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Future Computing Paradigms Network Plus funding opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions

More information on the opportunity can be found under
[Future computing paradigms Network Plus – UKRI](#)

Questions received before and during the webinar
ICT Theme
3 September 2026

Question 1: Project phases

Would you mind providing more details of the 18-month and 42-month phases? Can the first phase include the same partners as the second phase? Would the budget be for the first 18 months only?

Answer 1:

The project consists of an initial 18-month evidence-gathering phase to provide outputs for UKRI and UK government, followed by a 42-month Network Plus phase to draw the community together around the outcomes of the initial phase. The funding covers the full period of up to five years.

Different individuals or partners may contribute to different phases, depending on the expertise required. While some partners may be involved throughout, this is not a requirement. The Network Plus phase will engage the wider research and stakeholder community and may include a flexible fund to support community activities and development.

More information about the opportunity can be found under ["What we're looking for"](#).

Question 2: Flexible Fund

Is there an expected scale or approximate proportion of the award that should be allocated to the optional flexible fund? Would EPSRC welcome a phased model in which early flexible funding supports the evidence-gathering phase and later funding supports openly commissioned pilot and seed activities?

Answer 2:

The value of the flexible fund is ultimately at the applicant's discretion, although it would generally be expected to represent no more than 25% of the total call value. Applicants will be required to deliver the project and networking activities outlined in the call, regardless of whether they choose to include a flexible fund. The fund has been made optional to allow applicants flexibility, as some may see value in ringfencing a portion of the award for potential seeding activities, while others may not. As with all elements of the budget, applicants must justify the requested costs and demonstrate that they can successfully deliver the activities and outcomes set out in the call.

Question 3: Eol and multi-application eligibility

May an individual be named on more than one Eol (Expression of Interest) or full application—for example, as project lead on one proposal and project co-lead on another?

Answer 3:

Individuals may be named on multiple applications; however, they should only act as the lead on one application. Applicants should clearly define their role within each proposal. While there is no formal limit on the number of applications from a single institution, we would not normally expect more than one or two applications per university to help ensure strong, competitive proposals.

The completion of an [Expression of Interest](#) is mandatory and closes on 11 September 2026.

Question 4: Scope and collaboration with other networks

There is significant overlap between eFutures and Future Computing Paradigms. What areas are out of scope for Future Computer Paradigms because they are well covered by eFutures? For example, are devices/semiconductors an eFutures activity?

How do you envision the new network integrating with the existing network and initiatives in neuromorphic computing?

Answer 4:

While there is overlap with existing activities, for example in microelectronics, nothing is out of scope. The Network Plus will take a whole-systems, technology-spanning approach to future computing paradigms, covering everything from new architectures, hardware platforms to software engineering and distributed compute. The scope therefore spans the full application space and new modalities, including, for example, low power, cheap, self-powering (for example, bio-compatible, heat, solar), potentially disposable (for example, biodegradable or recyclable) compute solutions that are not necessarily high speed or have high compute power.

More information about the scope can be found under [“What we’re looking for”](#).

The successful applicant should actively engage with relevant UK and international networks and initiatives to maximise alignment, share learning and avoid duplication. Applicants are encouraged to build on existing work and community-building activities, bringing together researchers and stakeholders across the landscape from a future computing paradigms perspective. This could include engagement with activities in areas such as neuromorphic computing, microsystems and AI. eFutures has published reports that are available online and applicants are encouraged to reach out to them wherever relevant.

Examples for other networks can be found under [“Additional info”](#).

Read more information about [eFutures](#).

Question 5: Security checks and international collaborations

Could you provide any further indication of the anticipated security arrangements for the initial evidence-gathering phase? For example, should applicants plan for particular information-handling arrangements, staff checks or restrictions on international participation, given the potential sensitivity of the reports and engagement with National Security and Defence stakeholders?

Investigating the Future Computing Paradigms is a complex task that is difficult to achieve its goals without getting in touch with international leading technology hubs in USA and Europe. Are there any guidelines regarding the international collaboration or membership of the network?

Answer 5:

If the application is successful, further information regarding any additional requirements and arrangements will be disseminated if/as required.

While we appreciate that research is an international endeavour, this network will deliver an initial 18-month programme of activity to develop a robust evidence base and a coherent, whole-systems UK vision for future computing paradigms, including where the UK could or should be leading, collaborating, or building capability. This will position the UK to shape and, where appropriate, lead the development and adoption of transformative approaches to computation. As a result, the primary audience for this work will be EPSRC, UKRI and relevant stakeholders across UK government, given the sensitive nature of the evidence base.

While international collaborators and partners may be involved where appropriate, the successful applicant should ensure that all international engagement is undertaken in line with Trusted Research principles and relevant export control requirements. In addition, applicants may wish to engage with UK-based experts who analyse international industrial policy and technology strategies to help develop an understanding of global activity and priorities.

This is a partnership activity, and the successful applicant will work closely with eFutures, which has relevant expertise and established networks. UKRI and the Science and Technology Network also have international offices and connections through UK embassies and high commissions that may help facilitate engagement where appropriate.

Question 6: Industry involvement and businesses engaging with FCP

For the business side, is there also value in engagement with industry to determine what can possibly be marketed instead of working with academics?

How can businesses represent themselves to the eligible research organisations?
I'm thinking of companies developing Quantum or Neuromorphic tech.

Answer 6:

The Network Plus should bring together expertise from academia, industry and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive understanding of the future computing landscape and the UK ecosystem as a whole.

While EPSRC predominantly funds academic research, applicants are encouraged to engage with businesses to gain insight into current capabilities, capacity and their potential societal impact.

Applicants should consider that Trusted Research and Innovation principles also apply to project partners and collaborators. Given that the outputs of the initial phase are intended to inform UKRI and UK government, applicants should ensure that careful consideration is given to the role of partners within the Network Plus, including how information, data and insights are shared and managed.

Applicants may wish to combine stakeholder engagement with established qualitative research methods to ensure a robust and representative understanding of industry perspectives. This could include more systematic research into business views, priorities and future opportunities.

UKRI has a business engagement forum and can connect you with Innovate UK, Innovate UK Business Connect and Catapults to connect you to the wider landscape.

Applicants may wish to consider the operating environment, including social, economic, environmental and broader challenges. Rather than solely focusing on current business priorities, consideration may be given to future and emerging needs as these may influence future market opportunities and the direction of technological development.

Once the network is announced, we would be expecting the Network Plus to have an inclusive approach whereby additional partners could get involved in the network's activities. Businesses may contribute as project partners either direct cash contributions or in-kind contributions, such as providing expertise. They may participate in network activities, contribute to advisory or steering groups and host events where appropriate. While they would not receive direct funding benefits through these activities, they may indirectly benefit from engagement with the wider community.