

Q: Am I eligible to apply?

A: For support under this funding opportunity, applicants and organisations must be eligible to apply for funding from their respective country's funding agency. To be eligible for funding from this opportunity, you must have a project partner from Japan. For UK applicants, this opportunity is open to organisations with standard eligibility. [Check if your organisation is eligible](#).

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) eligibility

EPSRC standard eligibility rules apply to this funding opportunity, applicants in the UK must meet the EPSRC eligibility requirements. For full details, visit [EPSRC's eligibility page](#).

National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) eligibility

Applicants in Japan must meet the [NICT eligibility requirements](#). For further details, please refer to the forthcoming press release on the launch of the Call for applications; [Fund Project for Beyond 5G/6G](#). The application should be submitted by one or more research institutions seeking to undertake the commissioned work. For proposals submitted by universities or other academic institutions, submission in the form of an industry-academia consortium is recommended.

Q: When will I receive an acknowledgement for my expression of interest?

A: Shortly after you submit your Expression of Interest via the link provided below, you should be able to receive an email confirmation.

Link: <https://engagementhub.ukri.org/epsrc-future-communications/expression-of-interest-japan-uk-joint-call-for-col/>

Q: We have a few questions regarding the Expression of Interest (EOI) process and its relationship to the submission of the full proposal.

Our understanding is that the deadline for submitting the EOI is in September, which appears to coincide with the deadline for the full proposal. We would therefore be grateful if you could clarify the role and purpose of the EOI within the overall application process.

In addition, would it be possible to submit an EOI with a smaller team and subsequently expand the consortium when preparing the full proposal? More specifically, would it be permissible for two teams that have submitted separate EOIs to merge and submit a joint full proposal at a later stage?

A: The deadline for submitting the Expression of Interest (EOI) is 8 September 2026 at 4:00pm (UK time). The deadline for submitting the full proposal is 6 October 2026 at 4:00pm (UK time).

The EOI is not part of the formal assessment process, and no funding decisions will be made based on the information provided at this stage. Its purpose is to support EPSRC and NICT in planning the peer review process for the full proposals.

We strongly encourage applicants to submit an [Expression of interest](#), as the information provided helps to:

- understand the anticipated volume of applications
- identify suitable reviewers and panel members
- check for potential conflicts of interest

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As the EOI is used for planning purposes only, the composition of your team does not need to be final at this stage. You may refine or expand your project teams when preparing the full proposal. This can include bringing together teams that may have submitted separate EOIs, provided the final proposal meets all eligibility and other requirements outlined in the UKRI funding finder page for this opportunity.

Q: Can we change the Project Lead between the EOI and Full Stage?

A: Yes, this is acceptable. However, it is preferable to submit the EOI once the Project Lead has been confirmed. The EOI deadline is 08 September 2026, allowing sufficient time to establish collaborations and develop project teams.

Q: If there are changes between the Expression of Interest (EOI) and the Full Stage, is it necessary to resubmit the EOI?

A: It is not necessary to resubmit the EOI if there are changes between the EOI and the Full Stage. While resubmission is possible within the EOI submission deadline, it is not required.

Q: Is my organisation eligible to apply, i.e. is this an open call?

A: This is an open call.

For support under this funding opportunity, applicants and organisations must be eligible to apply for funding from their respective country's funding agency. To be eligible for funding from this opportunity, you must have a project partner from Japan. For UK applicants, this opportunity is open to organisations with standard eligibility. [Check if your organisation is eligible.](#)

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) eligibility

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Applicants in Japan must meet the [NICT eligibility requirements](#). For further details, please refer to the forthcoming press release on the launch of the Call for applications; [Fund Project for Beyond 5G/6G](#). The application should be submitted by one or more research institutions seeking to undertake the commissioned work. For proposals submitted by universities or other academic institutions, submission in the form of an industry-academia consortium is recommended.

Q: Is my project within remit of the opportunity (only for fulls)

A: Proposals related to one or more of the following scope areas are encouraged and submissions should be limited to these areas.

Scope area one: the integration of AI in digital networks

Scope area two: Non-terrestrial Networks

Scope area three: advanced optics/photonics

Q: Will this opportunity open again in the future and when?

A: At present there are no plans for a further version of this call to be open. This is currently a standalone opportunity with no further opportunities planned. EPSRC cannot guarantee any future funding activities at this point in time.

Q: Where are embedded images allowed and what sections?

A: Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant.

When including images, you must:

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- provide a descriptive caption or legend for each image immediately underneath it in the text box (this must be outside the image and counts towards your word limit)
- insert each new image on a new line
- use files smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Images should only be used to convey important visual information that cannot easily be put into words. The following are not permitted, and your application will be rejected if you include:

- sentences or paragraphs of text
- tables
- excessive quantities of images

A few words are permitted where the image would lack clarity without the contextual words, such as a diagram, where text labels are required for an axis or graph column.

The Vision and Approach sections are answered via a PDF submission so images can be included in this.

Research partnership section: Applicants are able to include embedded graphics, images, charts and tables within this section to aid with response. Use of embedded graphics, images, charts and tables should only be used as necessary.

Q: How long is the assessment process and when will we receive the outcomes of our application?

A: The assessment process is approximately 5.5 months with outcomes expected to be communicated by February 2027.

Q: What funding is available, and do you have a rough estimate per award? –

A: You may request up to £897,000 at 80% FEC per project for the UK component.

Q: What is the ‘Resubmission Policy’? No resubmissions allowed.

<https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/unsuccessful-applicants-and-resubmissions/epsrc-policy-on-resubmissions/>

Q: Can funds for equipment purchase be requested?

A: Equipment with value equal to or greater than £25,000 per item (including VAT) is not available through this funding opportunity. Individual items of equipment with value below £10,000 (including VAT) may be included in the ‘Directly incurred – other costs’ heading.

Q: What is the minimum and maximum time length the award should be?

A: The duration of the award can be up to a maximum of three years.

Q: Does the opportunity allow for more than one application from one research organisation?

A: Yes, this is allowed for both UK and Japan applicants

Q: Can a Project Lead make multiple applications for one opportunity?

A: Applicants may act as the Project lead in only one proposal, but may participate in additional proposals in other roles (e.g. Co-I).

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Q: I have a question about the Japan-based part of the project. Who should I contact?

A: Applicants should review https://www.nict.go.jp/public_trust_info/index.html for more information and contact info-itaku@ml.nict.go.jp for queries.

Q: What is the likely start date?

All grants must start on 1 April 2027 and finish by 31 March 2030 (unless agreed by EPSRC or NICT).

Q. Can PhD studentships at the UK institution be funded as part of this call?

A: PhD studentships may not be included in the costs sought from EPSRC.

Q. Is this call likely to be repeated or one off? Would re-submissions be acceptable if repeated?

A: No decisions have been made on the possibility of any future calls. Whether resubmissions are allowed will depend on the nature and scope of that Call.

Q. There is a comment regarding whether the proposal is related to a current or previously funded project. Can you please clarify?

A. As part of additional questions asked on The Funding Service, there will be a question on Duplication where applicants will be asked to declare if their proposal has any significant overlaps with past or existing grants. Applications submitted to this funding opportunity should not have substantial overlap (in terms of research vision and level of collaboration with Japan counterparts) with ongoing projects or with concurrent submissions to other EPSRC-UKRI/ NICT funding opportunities, including any international joint programmes.

Q. Are industrial partners strictly required for the application?

A. It is not a prerequisite. Applicants may find it beneficial to discuss proposals with industry stakeholders, where appropriate, and use the insights gained to help inform the development and writing of their proposal.

Q. For the expert review, will this be conducted by a combined UK-Japan team?

A. This process will follow suite with our standard expert review process where EPSRC would reach out to UK/ international reviewers as appropriate. In addition, Japanese peer reviewers nominated by NICT will also participate in the expert review stage of the assessment process.

Q. Would there be a UK-Japan panel to make the funding recommendations?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. Is it allowed to use the same equipment for the new project?

A. The use of the same equipment may be permissible, subject to a clear justification. Applicants should explain why the equipment is required for the proposed research and how it aligns with the project's vision and approach.

Q. Are research groups within businesses eligible to apply?

A. Businesses are not usually eligible for UKRI funding. Please refer to <https://www.ukri.org/publications/organisation-eligibility/research-organisations-eligible-for-ukri->

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[funding/](#) to see a list of research organisations who are suitable for UKRI funding. Eligibility differs for Japanese participants, please contact NICT for more details.

Q. I have completed my EOI, will I get a notification from EPSRC to complete the Full proposal?

A. The EOI is not mandatory and not part of the formal assessment process, and no funding decisions will be made based on the information provided at this stage. Its sole purpose is to support EPSRC and NICT in planning the peer review process in advance. Due to this reason, you will not receive any notifications or invitations to complete the full proposal.

Please go ahead and complete your full application on The Funding Service. The deadline for submitting the full proposal is 6 October 2026 at 4:00pm (UK time).

Q. Do we need to complete 2 applications?

A. You will need to complete a The Funding Service (TFS) application as well as an e-Rad application. Deadlines are 6 October for TFS and 7 October for e-Rad.

EPSRC and NICT each require certain information as part of their respective standard application processes. As a result, some sections of the application forms may differ (for example, EPSRC requires information relating to RRI, while NICT may require other information specific to its processes).

Applicants should ensure that the proposed core research, objectives, scope of work, and partnership arrangements are consistent across both submissions, while addressing any additional requirements specific to each funder within the relevant application form.

The Peer review of applications will be conducted through The Funding Service ONLY. Reviewers from the Japan side will also be taking part in the Peer review process via The Funding Service. Further, we plan to hold a joint UK-Japan panel to help arrive at the funding recommendations.

Q. What are the scope areas covered by this funding opportunity?

A. Applications related to one or more of the following scope areas are encouraged and submissions should be limited to these areas.

- Integration of AI in digital networks
- Non-terrestrial networks
- Advanced optics/ photonics

Please refer to 'What we're looking for' section in the UKRI Funding Finder page for detailed descriptions of these scope areas.

Q. Where should the information on Japanese team recorded within The Funding Service application?

A. The PI from Japan (and any Japanese team members) must be listed as the project partner and not as part of the Core team on the Funding Service.