

SIN Japan assists first ESRC-JST Joint Call for £3m on AI and Society

With SIN Japan's help, the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) of the UK and Japan Science & Technology Agency (JST) have agreed to launch a joint call on AI and Society in May 2019 to explore the impact AI technologies may have on society and the economy.



High quality research, but low volume

UK-Japan research collaborations in the social science, arts and humanities (SSH) are of a very high quality, 145% more impactful than the world average. However, the volume is currently relatively low at 430 joint papers over the past five years. Japan has world-class SSH researchers and many valuable datasets. Increasing UK-Japan collaboration will improve the quality of UK research and help to address the [Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges](#), like automation and healthy ageing, where there is much the UK can learn from Japan.

Developing new partnership for innovative research

In December 2017 SIN Japan organised for then Acting Chief Executive of ESRC, Professor Tony McEneaney, to visit Japan and meet with Japanese funding agencies, ministries and universities to explore potential collaborative opportunities. One of the common priority areas identified was Artificial Intelligence (AI), specifically how the increasing prevalence of AI is generating a range of economic, cultural and social challenges and opportunities. After further work, in September 2018, ESRC and RISTEX (Research Institute of Science and Technology for Society) of JST held a workshop in Tokyo to identify complementary areas for future collaboration on AI research. This has led to two significant programmes.

First, based on their visit, ESRC and AHRC successfully secured £2m funding to improve the connectivity between UK and Japanese SSH research communities through networking grants. This call was open across the entire breadth of the social sciences and humanities. In total there were [49 successful awards](#), each receiving up to £50,000.

Second, ESRC, AHRC and JST have agreed to launch their first ever joint call in May 2019, with combined total funding of over £3m. This will support approximately six UK-Japan joint collaborative research projects (for up to three years) to explore the impact of AI technologies on society and the economy.

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