

International Science Partnerships Fund

Expression of Interest: *UK-China Symposium on Resilient Planet*

Guidelines for Applicants

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Changes:

Date	Change
17 June 2024 version 1.0	First release
24 June 2024 version 1.1	13. Application process Updated application portal link

Participating Countries: China and the United Kingdom

June 2024

1. About International Science Partnerships Fund

This research collaboration and mobility programme of the International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) delivered by the British Council on behalf of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) is designed as an international funding programme between the United Kingdom (UK) and China to create and strengthen collaborative networks in interdisciplinary research in Resilient Planet that can lead the green industrial revolution to protect the planet and address major environmental challenges.

This programme, with a specific emphasis on a resilient planet, serves as a platform to unite researchers, policymakers, and representatives from international organisations. The programme will have the following overarching objectives:

- **Knowledge exchange:** provides a platform for researchers from different countries to share their research findings, methodologies, and best practices related to building a resilient planet.
- **Networking and collaboration:** brings together early career researchers from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds. It offers an opportunity for networking, fostering collaborations, and building professional relationships that can lead to joint research projects and future partnerships.
- **Promote interdisciplinary research:** A resilient planet requires a holistic approach that involves multiple disciplines such as environmental science, sustainability, social sciences, and engineering. The forum can encourage interdisciplinary research by facilitating discussions and interactions between researchers from different fields.
- **Capacity building:** By engaging with experienced researchers, mentors, and invited speakers, early career researchers can enhance their research skills, gain new perspectives, and learn about funding opportunities or career development strategies.
- **Policy impact:** offers a platform for early career researchers to present their work to policymakers, government officials, and representatives from international organisations. This can influence policy debates, decision-making processes, and lead to evidence-based policies that promote a more resilient planet.

2. Overview of the Symposium

The International Symposium on Resilient Planet (the Symposium) is a prominent component of the programme's activities. Working with UK Research and Innovation

(UKRI), the British Council will structure the Symposium around a wide range of engaging activities with researchers, policy makers, and research institutes in the UK and China.

- An academic symposium is organised, primarily targeted towards early career researchers in the field of natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. This symposium provides an opportunity for early career researchers to showcase their work, discuss emerging trends, and engage in productive dialogue with senior and leading researchers from the UK and China. It aims to foster a supportive environment that empowers young researchers and encourages their contributions to the field.
- A day of site visits is arranged for participants to explore universities and research centres in China. This enables them to gain insights into ongoing research projects, witness research facilities, and potentially discover areas for collaboration.
- A facilitated discussion is organised to scope the needs, priorities and recommendations for further research funding activities including sub-themes and target audience.

For more details, please see ***Appendix A: Tentative Programmes for Reference.***

3. Time and location

The event will take place in Beijing, China from **Monday 04 November** to **Wednesday 06 June 2024**, with expected arrival and registration on **Sunday 03 November 2024**.

4. Cost and Funding

The costs of international travel and accommodation for participants will be fully covered and arranged by the British Council. Participants are responsible for covering other logistical costs, such as obtaining visas and travel documents, and travel insurance.

The British Council will provide necessary support to successful applicants in obtaining visas to attend the Symposium in China, including issuing invitation letters. However, the British Council cannot control or influence the outcome of the application or give any advice on visa applications.

5. Thematic focus of the symposium

The symposium will focus on interdisciplinary research to address major environmental challenges and to lead the green industrial revolution to protect the planet. Priority research themes include (not exhaustive):

- Clean Energy
- Extreme Weather and Climate
- Agri-Tech
- Environmental Resilience

6. Proposed Academic Panels for the Symposium

Successful applicants will have the opportunity to present their research at the Symposium. To ensure a diverse and engaging experience, we have put forth four proposed panels, each approaching the theme from a unique angle.

Applicants are encouraged to select one or more panel(s) that closely align with their research topics, allowing them to showcase their expertise and contribution to the field. It is important to note that all participants will have the chance to attend and gain insights from each of these panels. Our aim is to foster a collaborative and inclusive environment where knowledge is shared, and diverse viewpoints are embraced.

- **Panel 1: Pioneer a Greener Future: Unlocking the Power of Clean Technologies**
 - *Description:* This panel aims to bring together researchers who are at the forefront of the clean technology revolution. We invite participants from individuals who possess deep knowledge and a keen interest in advancing renewable technologies, energy efficiency, materials science, carbon capture and storage, circular economy principles, and sustainable policies. This panel also welcomes insights on the integration of clean technologies into existing infrastructures and the role of economics, social sciences, and policymaking in facilitating the adoption of clean technologies. By emphasising interdisciplinary approaches, we seek to uncover comprehensive strategies for a sustainable future.
- **Panel 2: Secure Sustenance for all: Ensuring Sustainable and Equitable Access to Water, Food and Nutrition**

- *Description:* The objective of this panel is to assemble a diverse group of researchers committed to addressing the pressing challenges of sustainable water management, food security and nutrition, and how these systems impact and depend on one another. We encourage participants from individuals with accomplished backgrounds in water resource management, regenerative agriculture, food security and nutrition science. The discussion will focus on innovative approaches to ensuring reliable and equitable access to clean water and nutritious food. Additionally, the panel will explore the interdependencies between these areas and how they contribute to the overall health and resilience.
- **Panel 3: Adapt to Thrive: Enhancing Environmental Resilience and Adaptation**
 - *Description:* This panel aims to explore the intersection of extreme weather, climate resilience, and advancements in climate science. We welcome researchers from climate science, environmental studies, disaster management, and all related backgrounds to explore pressing research needs, including the social acceptability of adaptation measures, institutional barriers, and integrating adaptation into economic development and social inclusion agendas. Discussions include a range of topics from adaptation measures to community resilience strategies and practical solutions/technologies for addressing climate challenges.
- **Panel 4: Beyond Borders: Forging Collaborative Solutions for Global Development**
 - *Description:* With a focus on international development and intercontinental cooperation in sustainability, this panel will foster discussions on global sustainable development goals and strategic partnerships. We invite researchers from diverse backgrounds in policy studies, economics, development studies, and international relations to join us in addressing specific global challenges, such as climate change mitigation, poverty reduction, and sustainable urban development. By developing actionable strategies and fostering cross-border collaborations, this panel aims to create a cohesive global agenda for a prosperous and environmentally sustainable future.

7. Who is this opportunity for?

The call opens to eligible **early career researchers in the UK**. Early career researchers in China will be invited and nominated by partner organisations in China.

Senior researchers will be invited by the British Council in collaboration with partner organisations from the UK and China. The symposium will bring together up to 40 early career researchers and 10 senior researchers based in the UK and China to discuss key questions around the theme of 'Resilient Planet'. The symposium is designed specifically to encourage collaboration and networking between researchers from the UK and China.

We expect that **early career researchers** to:

- Present their research findings through presentations.
- Participate actively in conference sessions and workshops.
- Participate in panel discussions related to their research area.
- Engage in discussions, receiving feedback, and networking with other attendees.

We expect **senior researchers** to:

- Present a keynote or invited talk based on their expertise and research experience.
- Participate in roundtable discussions with Chinese and UK stakeholders.
- Moderate conference sessions, ensuring smooth transitions and adherence to the schedule.
- Share experiences, tips, and strategies for successful research and career progression.

8. Definition of Early Career Researcher

For the purpose of this programme, an early career researcher is defined as follows:

- Having completed or are close to completion of their PhD, potentially waiting for their final viva voce examination, which must be passed prior to taking up the award. ECRs will not have held a permanent academic or a post which allows them to supervise PhD students or submit research grants as a principal investigator. Time spent in teaching-only roles or academic related roles does not affect ECR status, provided no research element was part of the role.
- If a researcher does not hold a PhD degree but has research experience equivalent to a PhD degree holder and/or works in a field where a PhD degree

is not a prerequisite for established research activity, they can still be considered eligible. Participants from for-profit organisations cannot be funded.

- As we move toward greater inclusivity for ECRs from a wide range of backgrounds, we are no longer counting years spent in a specific career stage. Career breaks and alternative trajectories to an early academic career are all considered outside the definition of career stage.

9. Eligibility

All participants must meet following criteria:

- Participants must be qualified as early career researchers as defined in the Section 8 of the guideline.
- Participants must be based at eligible higher education institutions or research organisations in the UK, regardless of their own nationalities.
- While participants from UK universities' overseas campuses in China may be eligible to apply, priority will be given to researchers residing in the UK, as this initiative prioritises capacity strengthening and exchange opportunities between the UK and China.
- Eligible institutions and organisations:
 - Participants must be based at not-for-profit higher education institutions or publicly funded research organisations in the UK. The list of eligible UK institutions and organisation can be found here:
https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/eligible_uk_research_organisations_0.pdf
- Participants must receive signoffs from their institutions or organisations in acknowledging their applications. A *Letter of Support* issued by the Research Office, Head of Department, or equivalents will suffice (**Appendix B: Template of Letter of Support**).
- Participants must be able to travel on flights or other means of transportation chosen by the British Council.
- Participants must be able to stay at hotels chosen by the British Council.
- Participants must be able to participate in the entire event over three days.
- Participants must be able to sign a *Letter of Commitment* that outlines roles and responsibilities of the Participants and the British Council for this event.

10. Language

The event will be held in English. However, consideration will be given to non-native speakers and translation/interpretation can be provided for the event upon request.

11. Ethics and research governance

It is essential that all legal and professional codes of practice are followed in conducting work supported under this programme. Applicants must ensure their research will be carried out to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. Specifically, applications that involve research on animals, human participants, human tissue or patient/participant data must be accompanied by necessary permission certificates from the relevant local ethical review committees/authorities in the UK and the partner country, or an undertaking to obtain this permission in advance of the activity commencing. Failure to do so will result in applications being rendered ineligible and any funding already committed through this programme being rescinded.

Please refer to:

- The Research Councils UK 'Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct':
 - <https://www.ukri.org/?s=Policy+and+Guidelines+on+Governance+of+Good+Research+Conduct>
- The InterAcademy Partnership report 'Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in the Global Research: Enterprise':<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/24026/29429.aspx>.

12. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of the British Council's cultural relations ambitions. We are committed to ensuring that there is no unjustified discrimination in the selection of participants on the basis of age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, or on any other grounds which are irrelevant to decision making.

We partner with organisations and individuals who value diversity, promote dignity and inclusion and a culturally sensitive approach.

13. Application process

Applicants must submit their applications via British Council's online application portal below. If you are unable to use the online application for reasons of accessibility, please contact us at SPFLB4@britishcouncil.org.

<https://grants.britishcouncil.org/>

Please note that you will need to register on the website before you are able to start your application form. The application form will be linked to this log-in and password.

After registration, please make sure that you select the “UK-China Symposium on Resilient Planet” application form to start your application, as there may be other programmes open to application at the same time on this portal.

Applicants may refer to the application form in the **Appendix C** to prepare their application materials and submit their applications at the above link.

Applications and all supporting documents must be in English.

14. Selection process and criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria by the evaluation committee organised by the British Council in collaboration with partner organisations:

- **Academic excellence and proven research interest and/or experience in the symposium's theme (20%):** Applicants should demonstrate academic excellence and a strong passion for and previous involvement in research related to the symposium theme.
- **Commitment to international engagement and research collaboration (20%):** We value applicants who actively engage in international research collaborations and are dedicated to expanding their global network.
- **Value of symposium to applicant's career development (20%):** The applicant should explain how their participation in the symposium will enhance their professional growth and contribute to their career aspirations.
- **Value of applicant's contribution to the symposium and the impact of proposed research to society and the wider international community (20%):** We are looking for applicants whose research has the potential to make a significant impact on society and contribute to the global community. They

should articulate the value of their research and how it aligns with the symposium's goals.

- **Diversity and inclusion (20%):** We value diversity and inclusivity in our conference. Applicants who can contribute to a diverse and inclusive environment by bringing different perspectives and experiences are encouraged to apply.

Each application will be independently reviewed and scored by at least two members of the evaluation committee based on the criteria outlined above. Each criterion will be rated on a scale from 0 to 10, as detailed below. Following the individual evaluations, the committee will moderate the scores to establish a threshold for successful applications.

- 0 – Unacceptable
- 3 – Poor
- 5 – Adequate
- 7 – Good
- 10 – Excellent

15. Indicative Timeline

Activity	Date / Time
Launch the Call	17 June 2024
Deadline for Application	04 August 2024 12:00 mid-day British Summer Time
Selection	August 2024
Announcement of Results	Early September 2024

16. Data Protection

The British Council will use the information that you are providing in connection with processing your application under the International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) programme. The legal basis for processing your information is your agreement with our terms and conditions of application.

Your information will be used in making any consequential grant, grant payment, and for monitoring and reporting purposes.

We will need to share necessary data with application reviewers and panel members contracted by the British Council, international partners, the funder UK Department of

Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT) and contracted external evaluators (as required). Organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Equality data and geographical information, where collected, is used solely in preparing statistical reports.

The British Council complies with data protection law in the UK and laws in other countries that meet internationally accepted standards. You have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information.

If you have concerns about how we have used your personal information, you also have the right to complain to a privacy regulator. For further detailed information on how we process personal information, please refer to the privacy section of our website, www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection or contact your local British Council office (Attn: ISPF Team). We will keep your information for a period of 7 years from the date of your last activity under the ISPF programme.

Appendix A: Draft Programmes

Day 0 – Registration	Registration
Day 1 – Plenary Session and Policy Dialogue	Welcome speeches by British Council, UKRI and partner organisations
	Keynote speeches by leading and senior researchers
	Lunch
	Policy dialogue/Roundtable discussion with partner organisations
	Ice-breaking activities for early career researcher
	Welcome reception
Day 2 – Early Career Researcher Symposium	2 academic panels on specific topics of interests
	Lunch
	2 academic panels on specific topics of interests
	Networking activities and dinner
Day 3 – Visits to Chinese Universities and Research Centres	Site visits to selected universities or research centres in Beijing
	Working lunch with research students and researchers from the universities
	Facilitated roundtable discussions with universities or research centres
	Wrap-up session and closing remarks

Appendix B: Template of Letter of Support

[Official Letterhead]

[Date]

British Council
1 Redman Place,
Stratford London E20 1JQ

Letter of Support for [Applicant's Name]'s Participation in the British Council's Academic Symposium in China

We are writing this letter in support of [Applicant's Name]'s intention to participate in the *UK-China Symposium on Resilient Planet (tentative)* organised by the British Council, which is scheduled to take place in the week commencing 4 November 2024 in China.

We are pleased to endorse [Applicant's Name]'s attendance at this significant international conference in his/her/their field of expertise. We recognise the value and contribution that his/her/their participation will make to the conference and the broader academic community.

We have no objection to [Applicant's Name]'s participation, and we confirm that there are no conflicts or restrictions that prevent his/her/their attendance.

If you require any further assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

[Printed Name and Title]

[Email Address and Phone Number]

Appendix C: Application Form for Reference

Please note, this application form is to help you prepare your application only.

All applications must be completed by using the online application platform.

DO NOT SUBMIT THIS FORM

Failure to do so will result in your application not being considered.

SECTION 1: COUNTRY AND CATEGORY OF APPLICATION

I confirm that I am an applicant based at an eligible institution/organisation in the United Kingdom.

- Yes
- No

I confirm that I meet the early career researcher definition set by the British Council in the Guidelines for Applicants for this call.

- Yes
- No

SECTION 2: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Title

First name

Surname

How would you describe your gender

- Female
- Male
- In another way, you can specify
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have any disability

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Institution/Organisation

Department	
Position	
Work email address	
Work telephone number please make sure you include the country calling code, e.g.: +44 161 9577 755	
Address of Residence Please make sure you include postal code and country	
Country of the UK	<input type="radio"/> England <input type="radio"/> Scotland <input type="radio"/> Northern Ireland <input type="radio"/> Wales

SECTION 3: RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Describe your research interests and how they align with the theme 'resilient planet' of the Symposium. (Maximum: 200 words)	
List no more than three academic publications, conference presentations, or other academic activities/achievements related to the Symposium theme. For each achievement, please explain the significance and novelty of your research and highlight any UK-China research collaboration elements or potentials. (Maximum: 300 words each)	1
	2
	3

SECTION 4: MOTIVATION AND EXPECTATION

<p>What motivates you to participate in this Symposium? (Maximum: 500 words)</p>	
<p>What activities do you expect to be organised, and how do you anticipate these activities contributing to your research and career development? (Maximum: 500 words)</p>	
<p>Are there specific researchers from the UK and/or China that you would like to meet during the Symposium? If so, why? (Please list no more than 3 persons)</p>	
SECTION 5: CONTRIBUTION	
<p>Which panel is most suitable for you to present your work? (First choice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Panel 1 <input type="radio"/> Panel 2 <input type="radio"/> Panel 3 <input type="radio"/> Panel 4
<p>Which panel is also relevant to your research, if applicable. (Second choice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Panel 1 <input type="radio"/> Panel 2 <input type="radio"/> Panel 3 <input type="radio"/> Panel 4
<p>What is the title of the research that you plan to bring to this panel?</p>	
<p>Outline key points you would like to discuss during the panel and explain their importance. (Maximum: 500 words)</p>	

Describe how you will contribute to the Symposium and how this can benefit other researchers from the UK and China.
(Maximum: 500 words)

SECTION 6: GENDER EQUALITY STATEMENT

Outline how you have taken meaningful and proportionate consideration as to how your research will contribute to reducing gender inequalities.
(Maximum: 500 words)

SECTION 7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Is there any additional information you would like to provide that is relevant to your application?

If there is any assistance you would like to request from the British Council (e.g., accessibility requirements), please contact us by email to: ISPFLB4@britishcouncil.org