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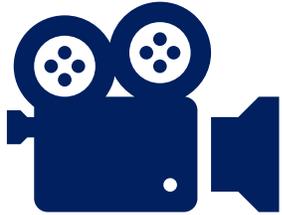# UKRI Digital Research Technical Professional (RTP) Skills NetworkPlus

Funding Opportunity Webinar
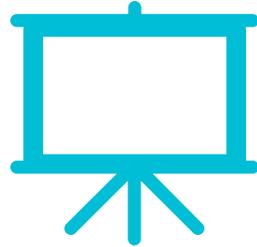23 May 2024 14:00-15:00

Agenda

1. Welcome and overview – Anna Angus-Smyth, NERC

2. UKRI DRI Ambitions– Sophie Janacek, UKRI

3. Objectives and intended outcomes of this funding opportunity – Charlotte Clarke, NERC

4. Specific requirements of this funding opportunity – Tim Shuttleworth, BBSRC

5. Panel Q&A

6. Close

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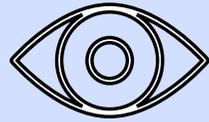
Housekeeping

Webinar is
being recorded

Slide deck and
recording will be
shared

Please ask any
additional questions in
Q&A box

For attendees who
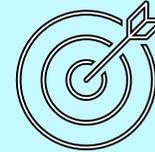opted in, contact
details will be shared

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UKRI's vision for Digital Research Infrastructure

Our Vision

A coherent state-of-the-art national Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) that will seamlessly connect researchers and innovators to the computers, data, tools, techniques and skills that underpin the most ambitious and creative research

Our Approach

DRI is a system that includes large-scale computing (LSC), data storage, facilities, software, networks, skilled DRI professionals, and other components.
Working with Councils, we will achieve our vision by evolving existing infrastructures to support new communities of practice and, subject to funding, by investing in new capabilities.

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Digital Research Infrastructure

- **Long-term planning**

- **Driven by community requirements**

- **Environmental sustainability**

- **Partnership with government and industry**

- **Five cross-cutting themes**

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UKRI's vision for a national Digital Research Infrastructure

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Turning data into knowledge
Catalysing breakthroughs and accelerating innovation and productivity

A foundation to enable UK researchers and innovators to harness the full power of modern digital platforms, tools, techniques and skills:

- A breadth and depth of capabilities and skills
- Seamless connection of communities to data, tools and techniques
- Accelerating productivity by enabling secure and easy access
- A step change in computational power
- Fostering collaboration across disciplines
- New capabilities and new communities of practice
- Environmentally sustainable

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION TEAMS

UKRI National Digital Research Infrastructure

Data infrastructure
- Storage and archives
- Data stewardship
- Interfaces
- Shared tools and pipelines

Large-scale computing
- HTC
- HPC
- Cloud computing
- Heterogenous computing
- Next generation software

Secure services and tools for sensitive data
- Trusted research environments
- Privacy-enhancing technology
- Securing trust

Skills and career pathways
- Career paths progression
- Training
- Community building
- Knowledge exchange
- Skills access
- Public engagement

Foundational tools, techniques and practices
- Networks
- AAAI
- Administrative processes
- Security
- Software

The inter-dependent themes of the digital ecosystem

UKRI's Digital Research Infrastructure Programme

A phased approach…

UKRI secured £129 million for digital infrastructure (profile rising to £70m in year three) of this Spending review (FY22/23 – FY24/25)

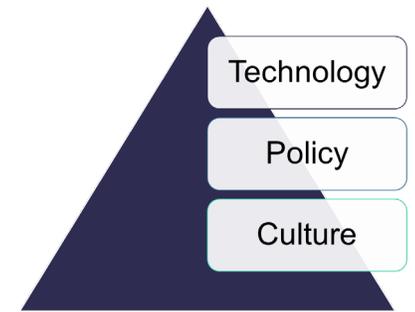**UKRI DRI Phase 1 (2021-23) – £34 million invested in:**

- A portfolio of interventions to enhance our existing digital infrastructures

- Investments in priority areas including Net Zero and Trusted Research Environments

- Scoping activities to assess data and computing requirements in more detail

UKRI DRI Phase 2 (2023 onwards) :

- Established the Advisory Group for DRI (AGD)

- AGD has made a recommendation for a portfolio of 36 projects.

- Projects take many forms and cover all themes of the strategy. They are delivered by different Research Councils

AGD recruitment will take place over this Summer – stay tuned!

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Skills and career pathways

UKRI DRI strategy aims to... invest in people... to widen the breadth and depth of skills needed to fully exploit ... cutting-edge DRI and to enable the adoption of modern digital techniques across the UK research sector.'

Grow the number and diversity of DRI Professionals:

- Build new/enhanced communities of DRI professionals
- Put in place new/enhanced, attractive, well-developed career paths and development
- Support increased diversity of people in the DRI sector
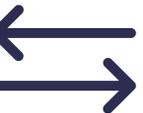- Enabling improved access to training

Increase Retention of DRI Skills within the research and innovation ecosystem

- Improve recognition and profile of DRI Professionals
- Incentivise best practice

An agile, efficient DRI skills base to respond to growing needs in different sectors and urgent priorities

- Enhance 'frictionless' mobility of people across domains & sectors & between operational, research & industry roles
- Maximise exchange of knowledge, opportunities, training, skills across domains and sectors
- Maximise the value and use of UKRI DRI investments through professional support and skills provision
- Enhance support for the existing RTP base, to ensure we have leading edge capabilities in a changing landscape

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Digital Research Technical Professionals (RTPs)

An inclusive umbrella term which includes hundreds of job titles **such as**:

- Data scientists

- Research software engineers

- Data stewards / curators

- Systems administrators

- Technical delivery of digital research infrastructures

- Technical professionals as part of research teams

Objectives

- Build new and enhanced communities of Digital RTPs that are diverse, inclusive and interdisciplinary.

- Support development and sharing of new Digital RTP skills across domains and disciplines

- Facilitate collaborations between Digital RTPs, researchers and innovators, across domains and disciplines

- Enable porosity of Digital RTPs across domains and disciplines

- Raise the profile of digital RTPs in the UK and create broader planning for their support and career development

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Outcomes of the NetworkPlus awards

Strong and effective leadership with communities of practice for Digital RTP's in research and innovation

Address cross-cutting Digital RTP Skills challenges across UKRI's research and innovation communities

Clearer career paths and support for Digital RTPs to ensure greater attraction, retention and mobility, and sustainable and flexible career paths

Maximising investment in other areas of the Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) programme through addressing key challenges underpinning the DRI themes

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What we're looking for

- Applications for projects that **equitably bring together disciplines, sectors, and domains across UKRI's remit** to address cross-cutting challenges related to **digital RTP skills and careers**

- Led by a **Digital RTP champion**, providing leadership, coordinating collaborations, seeding better ways of working, and catalysing learning, capability, and capacity for digital RTPs

- Projects up to **£2 million at 100% fEC,** with **UKRI funding 80% fEC**

- Projects must **start by 1 October 2024** and may last up to **48 months**

We will fund:

- project lead and project co-leads' (termed 'digital RTP champions') time

- NetworkPlus co-ordinator

- partnership manager

- administrative support

- networking activities

- workshops, conferences and other events

- travel and subsistence

- flexible fund

- associated estates and indirect costs

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Example flexible fund activities

- Expected min. 50% of total budget

- Not intended for named individuals on application

Events led by champions and the community

Activities to connect users, industry and other stakeholders with the digital RTP skills base

Activities to identify and disseminate key challenges, e.g. horizon-scanning

Support for collaborations, secondments, and placements

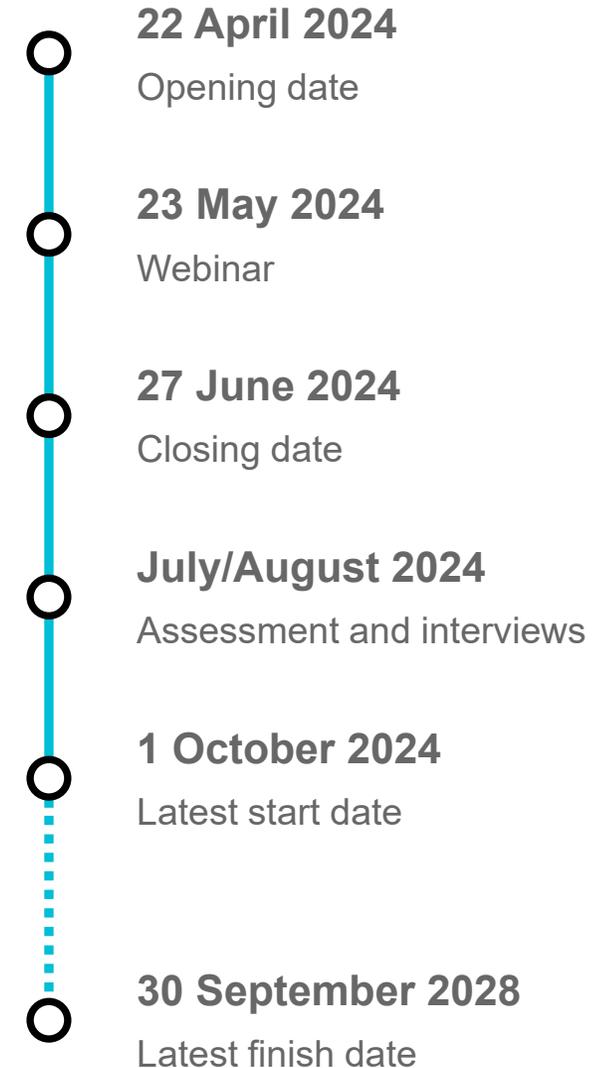Activities to build the profile of RTPs in UK research and innovation

Support for innovative career development opportunities

Equipment to support networking, events and communication

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Assessment and timeline

- Applications shortlisted by expert panel

- Shortlisted applicants invited to interview in July/August 2024

- Expert panel will assess applications against assessment criteria:

  - Vision

  - Approach

  - Governance

  - Applicant and team capability to deliver

  - Champion role

  - Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

  - Flexible fund

22 April 2024
Opening date

23 May 2024
Webinar

27 June 2024
Closing date

July/August 2024
Assessment and interviews

1 October 2024
Latest start date

30 September 2028
Latest finish date

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Thank you

Contact details:

- Questions around this specific funding opportunity – digitalrtpnetworkplus@ukri.org

- Questions around the system/ submitting your application- support@funding-service.ukri.org

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