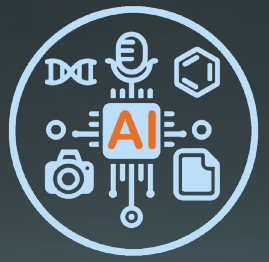
OMAIB Round 1 Funding Call
Launch Webinar



Haiping Lu

Director - UK Open Multimodal AI Network (UKOMAIN)

On behalf of the UKOMAIN Executive Board

Funded under EPSRC Network Plus: Tomorrow's Engineering Research Challenges

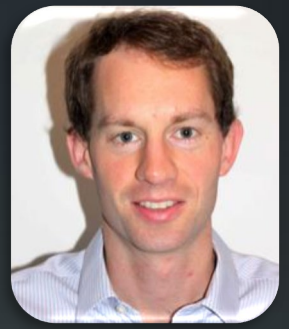
University of Sheffield | University of Glasgow | UCL | UKRI Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Team

Haiping Lu - Director @Sheffield

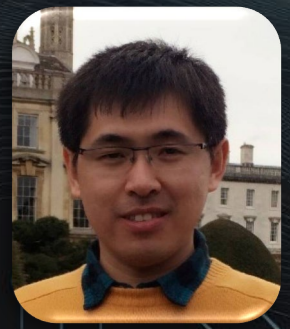
Nicola Morley – Deputy Director @Sheffield

Nataliya Tkachenko - Lead for Industry & Public Engagement @Lloyds & Shef



Peter Charlton – Lead for Early Career Researchers @Nokia & Shef

Ajinkya Rao – Portfolio Manager at EPSRC



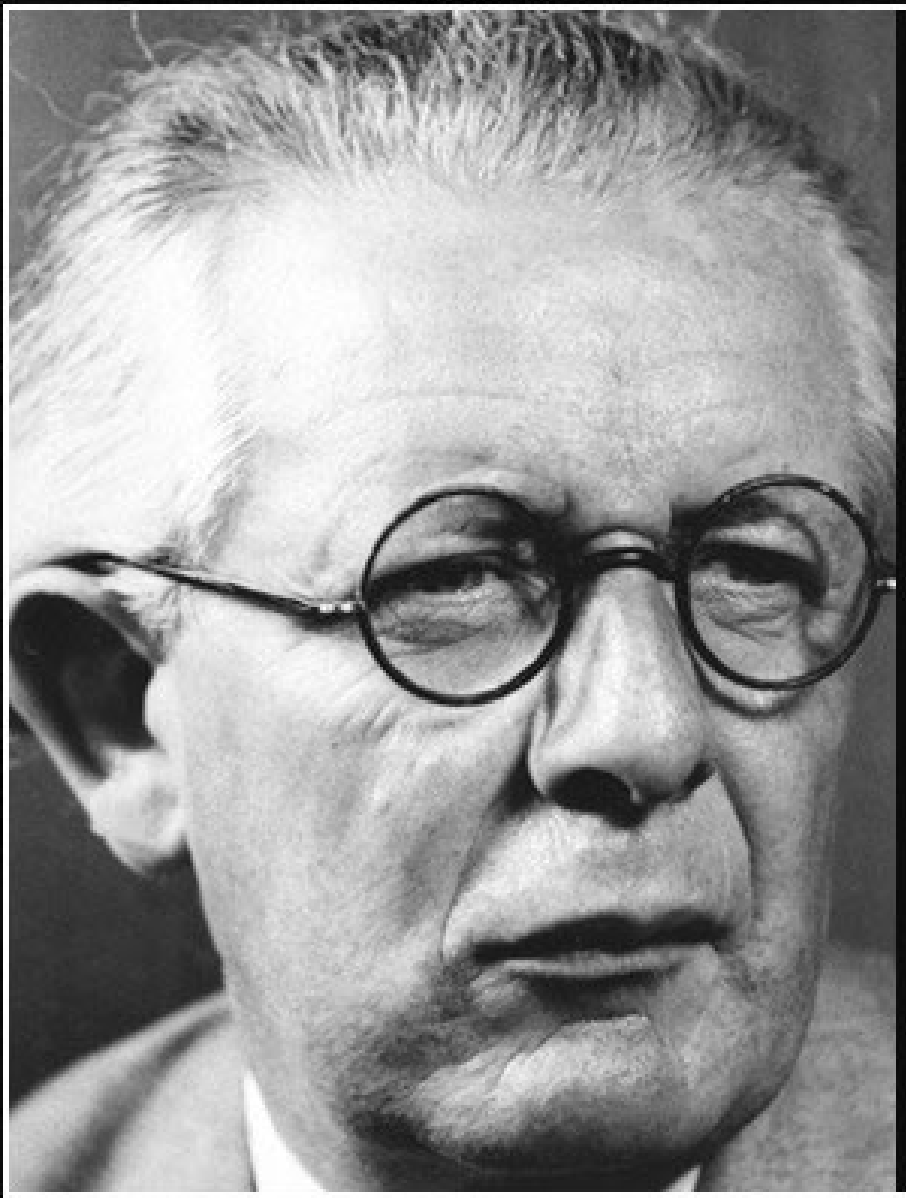
Dezong Zhao - Lead for UKRI & Government Engagement @Glasgow

Yao Zhang – Lead for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion @UCL

Aayush Chiniwalla - Network Coordinator @Sheffield

Agenda

- Welcome and introduction
- UKOMAIN and OMAIB overview
- Funding call scope, expectations, and timeline
- Application process and key criteria
- MultimodalAI’25 abstract submissions
- Q&A and discussion



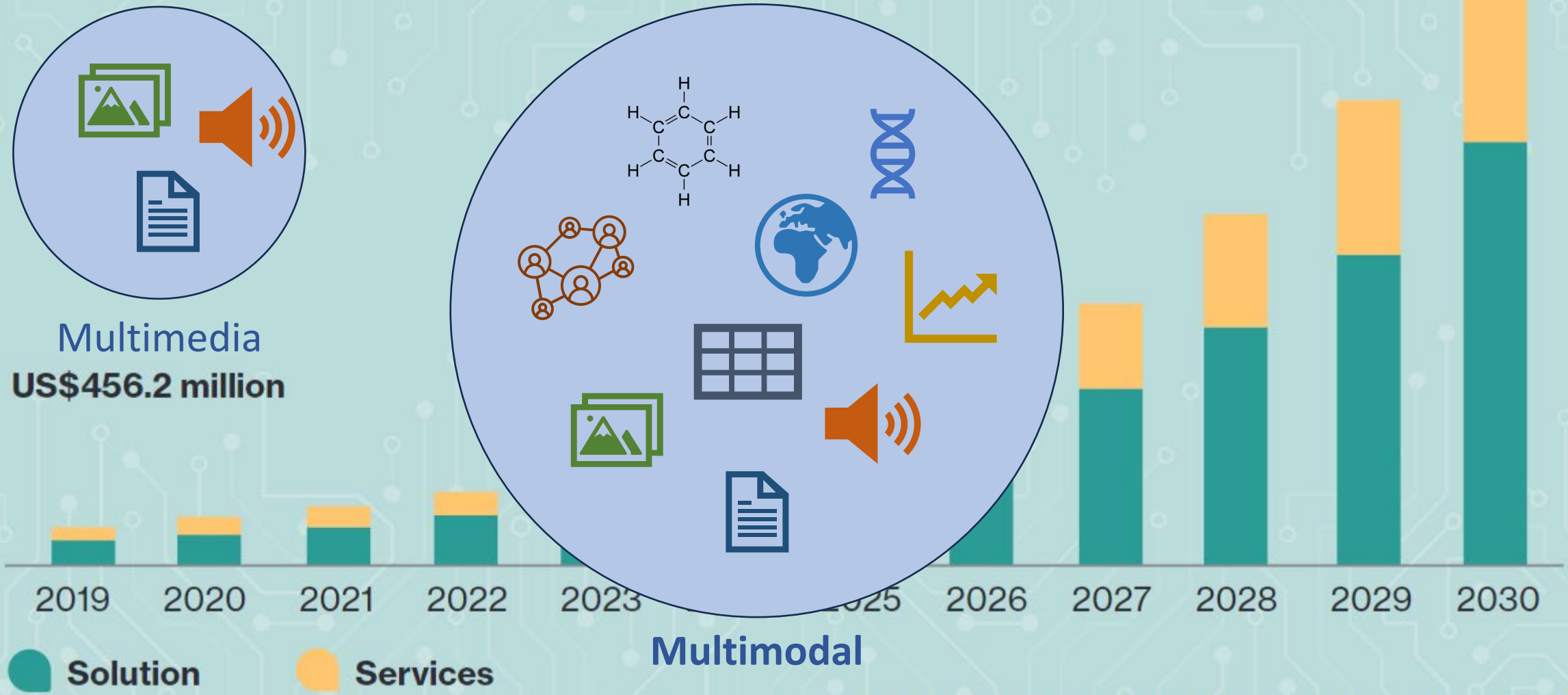
Scientific knowledge is in perpetual evolution; it finds itself changed from one day to the next.

— Jean Piaget —

AZ QUOTES

Multimodal prospects

The global multimodal AI market is expected to grow at an annual average rate of 32.2% between 2019 and 2030 to reach US$8.4 billion.



Source: Compiled by MIT Technology Review Insights, based on data from KBV Research, 2023

Tomorrow's Engineering Research Challenges Need Multimodal AI

Multimodal data integration

Multidisciplinary collaboration

Vision

Model-centric

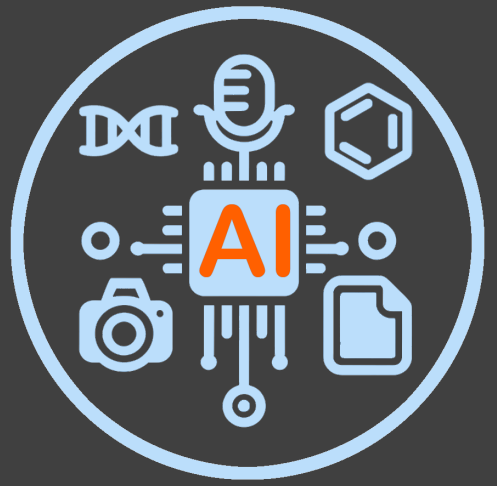
Data-centric

Deployment-centric

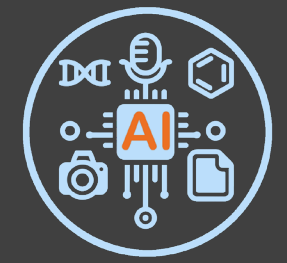
Deployment constraints

End-user needs

Open, dynamic, and interdisciplinary ecosystem



Objectives



Build diverse interdisciplinary network

Create knowledge exchange platform

Identify & fund key focus areas of high impact

Engage industry & policymakers

Promote sustainability & responsibility

Enhance research capability & training

Towards deployment-centric multimodal AI beyond vision and language: Challenges & Recommendations

Modality incompleteness

Multimodal heterogeneity

Cross-modality alignment

Modality complementarity

Multimodal privacy risk

Expected Research Outcomes

FAIR open multimodal data

FAIR open-source software

Critical mass in key focus areas

UK Open Multimodal AI Network

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

UKOMAIN Funding Call 2025

Open Multimodal AI Benchmark (OMAIB)

Benchmark Datasets **Benchmark Tasks** **Evaluation Protocols**

Baseline models **Interdisciplinary Team** **Ecosystem Building**

EOI: Submit by 24 September

Web: https://multimodalai.github.io/omaib/

Image: © Daniel Case / GNU Free Documentation License

OMAIB Focuses → Real-world Challenges

Open → ecosystem

Interdisciplinary & collaborative

Reuse & leverage what's there

Deployment-centric: constraints

Community-driven: coordinated

Shared infrastructure - GitHub

What We're Looking For

- Benchmark datasets, tasks, metrics, & baselines
- Align with one or more TERC areas
- Reflect real-world deployment relevance
- Share outputs openly (code, data, docs)
- Involve industry and end-users

Funding and Duration

- Total funding: £160,000
- Up to £40,000 per project (80% FEC)
- Project duration: up to 12 months
- Targeting 4–8 projects
- Emphasis on cost-effectiveness

Key Dates

EOI deadline: 24 Sept 2025

Full proposal deadline: 17 Nov 2025

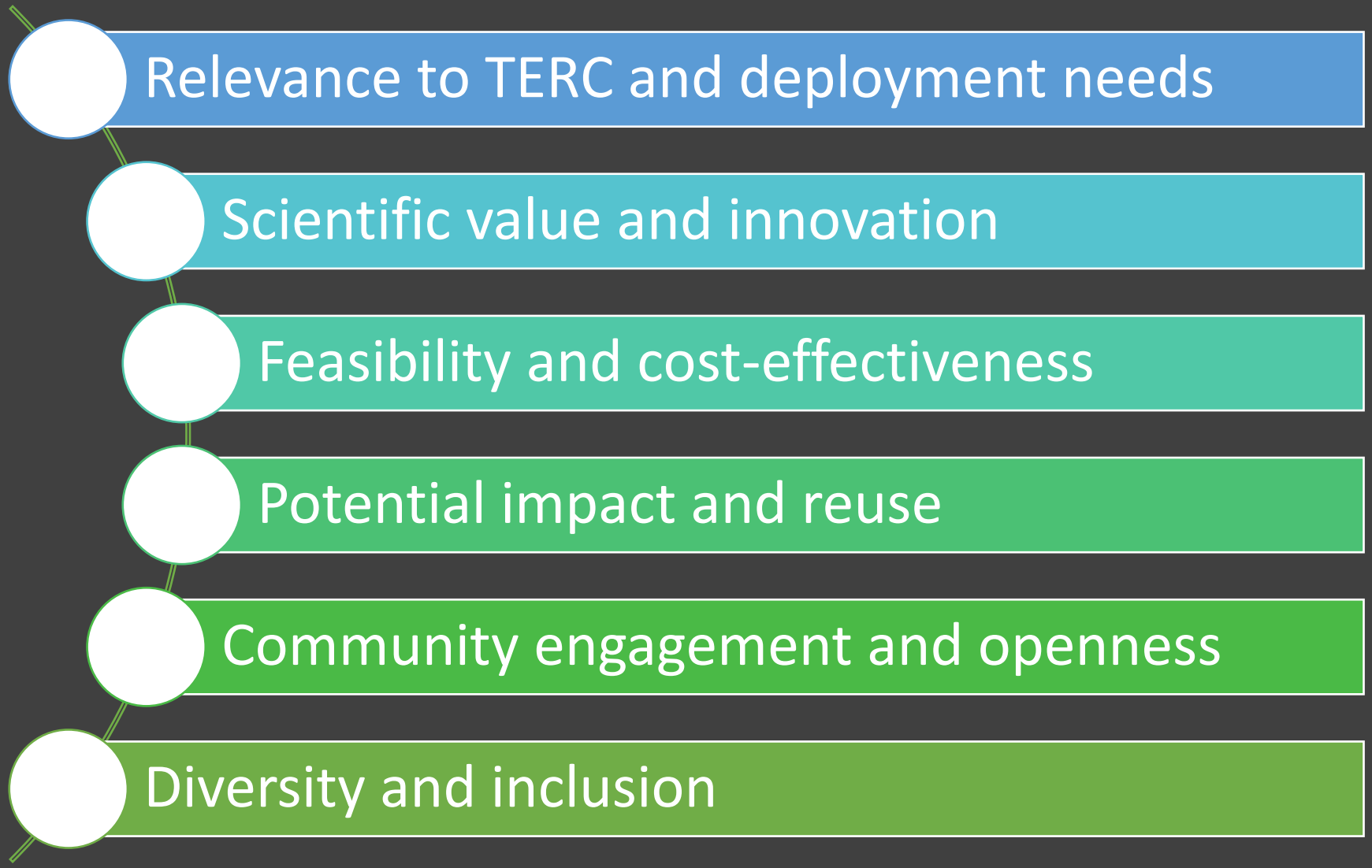
Video pitch - shortlisted: 8 December 2025

Project start: By 1 April 2026

Eligibility

- Standard EPSRC eligibility criteria
- At least one industry partner (LoS)
- Engagement with end-users
- Openness: code/data shared openly
- Experience with benchmarks or open research

Evaluation Criteria



UK Open Multimodal AI Network

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Third Workshop on Multimodal AI

Barbican Centre, London, 16–17 Sept 2025

Keynotes **Funding & Policy** **Hackathon (15 Sep PM)**

Awards **Talks & Posters** **Panel Discussions**

Photo Competition **Travel Bursaries** **Volunteering**

Register: https://bit.ly/multimodalai25-reg

Submit abstract: https://bit.ly/multimodalai25-abs

Sponsor: https://bit.ly/multimodalai25-sponsor

Join the UK's largest multimodal AI community event to shape the future!

https://multimodalai.github.io/multimodalai25/

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Community Discussions & Matchmaking

- GitHub Discussions: find collaborators, ask questions, & share ideas
- Organised by category (Round 1, Community) with pinned threads
- Use ‘[TERC]’ labels to tag your topic’s relevant challenge area
- Matchmaking, Q&A, and idea sharing encouraged

Q&A and Discussion

- 20 Qs via reg.: PI-#; non-UK; visiting; PhD; R2/3
- Share your questions via Zoom Q&A
- Use GitHub Discussions
- Visit multimodalai.github.io/omaib
- Follow www.linkedin.com/company/ukomain