

PCST 2027

Science Communication for a Shared Future:

Engage, Empower, Enlighten

Call for Proposals

Shanghai, China • 24–27 May 2027

Submission deadline: 19 October 2026

The Network for the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) warmly invites proposals for its bi-annual conference, PCST 2027, to be held in Shanghai, China. The theme is: *Science Communication for a Shared Future: Engage, Empower, Enlighten*.

To engage, in the fullest sense, is to show up in a genuine relationship: responsive, accountable, changed by the encounter. To empower is to ask honestly what structures prevent people from participating in scientific knowledge-making and sharing, and to work to remove them. To enlighten is to expect illumination to travel in every direction: to enter a conversation prepared to learn, to be surprised, to find that other ways of knowing have something to teach us. Taken together, these are a commitment to a different kind of science communication field.

We welcome proposals that grapple with these three interconnected subthemes from any angle: empirical, theoretical, practical, artistic, pedagogical, or policy-oriented. Whether you are presenting new research, sharing hard-won lessons from the field, or staging a conversation or a performance, there is a place for your contribution here.

PCST conferences are at their best when they model the very values we study. We encourage proposals from scholars and practitioners at every career stage, from every region of the world, and across the full breadth of science communication practice and research.

Key Dates

Submission portal opens	10 August 2026
Submission deadline	19 October 2026
Notification of decisions	14 December 2026
Early-bird registration closes	31 January 2027
Regular registration closes	<i><u>Presenters must register by 5 April 2027</u></i> if they want to be included in the program. Delegates who plan to attend but are not presenting can register until 19 April 2027.
Workshops	Monday, 24 May 2027
Main conference	Tuesday–Thursday, 25–27 May 2027

Submission Types

PCST 2027 welcomes proposals in six formats. Please read the descriptions below carefully before submitting. Each format plays a distinct role in the conference programme, and the review committee will assess proposals in the context of the format selected.

Individual Talk (Academic)

Individual talks are 10-minute presentations of original research. Talks will be grouped thematically by the programme committee to create coherent, well-matched sessions that encourage substantive dialogue between presenters and the audience. Each session will end with a Q&A and discussion among all presenters.

Proposals should include an abstract (up to 250 words) clearly describing the research question, theoretical or methodological approach, key findings or arguments, and relevance to the conference theme or to the field of science communication more broadly.

Suited to: Completed or near-complete empirical or conceptual research.

Abstract: Up to 250 words.

Practice Insight

Practice Insights offer science communication professionals, educators, and practitioners a dedicated space to share what they have learned through professional experience. These are 10-minute presentations focused on applied work: programmes, campaigns, exhibitions, outreach initiatives, or other practice-based contributions. Presentations will be grouped thematically by the programme committee so that each Practice Insight session forms a coherent set. Each session will end with a Q&A and discussion among all presenters.

You do not need a formal research methodology to submit a Practice Insight. What matters is reflection: What did you set out to do? What happened? What would you do differently, and, most importantly, what does the science communication field stand to learn from your experience?

Suited to: Science communicators, educators, and practitioners with applied experience to share.

Abstract: Up to 250 words.

Lightning Talk

A Lightning Talk is a focused 3-minute presentation paired with a physical poster, designed to maximise the diversity of voices in the programme and spark rich, informal conversation. Presentations will be grouped thematically by the programme committee so that each Lightning Talk session forms a coherent set, with presentations followed by a group Q&A. Physical posters will be

displayed throughout the conference, providing opportunities for attendees to engage with them more deeply outside of dedicated Lightning Talk sessions.

This format rewards clarity and confidence. You have three minutes and one slide to make your point and invite the room into your work.

Format requirements:

- 3 minutes for your spoken presentation
- 1 slide (time-saving tip: use a digital version of your physical poster as your slide!)
- A physical poster to be displayed throughout the conference for discussion

Suited to: Early-stage research, practice snapshots, bold ideas, and work that benefits from conversation.

Abstract: Up to 250 words.

Note for Individual Talk and Practice Insight submitters: When submitting, you may indicate that you are willing to be considered for a Lightning Talk if your proposal is not accepted in your preferred format. This is entirely optional and will not affect the review of your original submission.

Discussion and Debate

Discussion and Debate sessions bring together multiple voices around a shared question, controversy, or challenge in science communication. Rather than a sequence of individual talks, this format is designed for genuine exchange among panellists, and between panellists and the audience. A well-constructed Discussion and Debate session will feature diverse perspectives and encourage audience engagement, beyond a simple Q&A.

Sessions may include up to five speakers. Speakers may acknowledge co-authors, but the session is designed around the participating speakers themselves.

Proposals must include:

- A short description of the discussion topic or theme (up to 50 words)
- For each speaker: name, affiliation, email, and a short abstract of their individual contribution (up to 100 words)
- A brief description of the diversity represented by the panel (up to 50 words), covering characteristics including (but not limited to) country, gender, career stage, and balance of researchers and practitioners. This can describe the panel in aggregate; there is no need to link characteristics to individual speakers.

Speakers: Up to 5 (minimum 3 recommended).

Suited to: Linked research programmes, contested questions, cross-sector dialogues, or collaborative projects.

Artistic Performance

PCST 2027 welcomes proposals for artistic performances, installations, or creative works that engage with themes of science communication in any form: theatre, storytelling, music, visual art, film, interactive installation, or beyond. Creative practice is not merely a vehicle for communicating science but a distinct way of knowing and engaging with it.

Proposals should describe the nature of the work, its relationship to the conference theme, and any practical requirements (space, equipment, duration). The programme committee will work with accepted artists to find the most suitable slot and setting within the programme; however, we cannot guarantee we will be able to accommodate all requests.

Suited to: Artists, performers, creative practitioners, and researcher-artists working at the intersection of science and culture.

Abstract: Up to 250 words, including any technical or space requirements.

Workshop

Workshops are participatory, hands-on sessions in which facilitators actively engage participants in a shared activity, exercise, or enquiry. PCST 2027 workshops are held on Monday 24 May (the day before the main conference) and run for a set length of 75 minutes.

All workshop rooms are equipped with moveable chairs and a projector, and can accommodate up to 50 participants. If your workshop requires additional materials (craft supplies, printed resources, or other hands-on items), please be prepared to bring these yourself, and note any requirements clearly in your proposal. While we will do our best, we cannot guarantee we will be able to accommodate all special setup requests.

The best workshop proposals are clear about what participants will actually do, and honest about why that activity requires the workshop format rather than one of the other five formats.

NB: Workshops will be considered separately and may be asked to collaborate jointly with other proposed workshops if there is significant overlap.

Proposals must include:

- A clear description of the workshop activity and how it will be facilitated
- The intended learning outcomes or experience for participants
- Any materials or room setup requirements beyond the standard provision

Suited to: Skill-building, co-design, creative methods, and activities that genuinely require participation.

Abstract: Up to 250 words.

Submission Guidance

General Information

All proposals must be submitted through the PCST 2027 online submission portal by 19 October 2026. Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Please note that as a PCST delegate you can ***present a maximum of two contributions*** during the conference (although you can be listed as a co-author on as many items as you like). If you are submitting multiple abstracts and more than two are accepted, you will have to choose which two to present.

Each submission requires:

- Title of presentation
- Presentation type (selected from the formats above)
- Presenting author name, affiliation (organisation or university), and email address
- Additional author names and affiliations, if applicable
- Abstract (see word limits by format above)
- Three keywords, selected from a keyword list (available on the submission portal)
- Accessibility information: any accessibility needs relevant to your presentation or participation in the conference

A Note on Discussion and Debate Submissions

Discussion and Debate proposals follow a slightly different structure in the submission system. Rather than a single abstract, the submission form will ask for a short description of the session topic (up to 50 words), and then, for each speaker, a name, affiliation, email address, and individual abstract (up to 100 words). You will also be asked to briefly describe the diversity represented by your panel (up to 50 words), as outlined above.

Accessibility

PCST is committed to building a genuinely accessible conference. All submitters will be asked whether they or their co-authors have accessibility needs relevant to their presentation or participation. We ask this at the point of submission so that we can plan thoughtfully from the outset. This information will be handled with care and used only to support your participation.

Use of Generative AI

Generative AI can be used to support language translation and editing (e.g., for grammar, spelling, clarity) while preparing your submission. However, in submitting to the PCST 2027 conference, you confirm that your abstract represents your own, original ideas, experiences, and/or research findings.

GDPR

All data gathered during the submission and review process will comply with GDPR. During the submission process, you will be asked to consent to have your name and email address shared with the PCST Network (all submissions) as well as with your session chair (for accepted submissions).

Review Process

All submissions will be peer reviewed by members of the PCST 2027 Scientific Committee. Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the conference theme or to the field of science communication
- Clarity and quality of the abstract
- Originality and significance of the contribution
- Rigour of the methodology and/or theoretical framework (Individual Talks only)
- Diversity of the speakers (Discussion and Debate only)
- Appropriateness of the chosen format

Submitters will be notified of decisions by 14 December 2026.

Please note: Acceptance of a proposal is conditional on at least one author registering for the conference. All presenting authors are expected to register by 5 April 2027.

Bursary Program

A limited number of bursaries are available for presenters who require additional funding to be able to attend PCST 2027. If you require a bursary to attend, you will have an opportunity to submit your request during the submission process.

While we try to maximize the number of bursaries we provide, we cannot guarantee support for everyone. Bursary applications will be reviewed by the Bursary Committee and final decisions shared with applicants before registration closes.

A Final Word

Shanghai is one of the world's great cities of exchange: a place where ideas, cultures, and futures have long converged. We can think of no better home for a conference about communication across difference, about the work of building shared understanding in a complicated world.

We look forward to reading your proposals, and to welcoming you to Shanghai in May 2027.