



**TRILATERAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS ON
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

Open jointly by

**The French National Research Agency (ANR, France),
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V. (DFG, Germany),
and
Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST, Japan)**

Opening date:

July 30, 2019 10:00 CEST (17:00 JST)

Closing date:

October 25, 2019 10:00 CEST (17:00 JST)

Link to the call on the ANR website:

<https://anr.fr/en/open-calls/french-german-japanese-AI>

Link to the call on the DFG website:

https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/info_wissenschaft/

Link to the call on the JST website:

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/aip/call/index.html>

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Applicants are advised to read carefully the entire document as well as the corresponding national documents and national regulations of each country before submitting research project proposals.

CONTEXT AND AIM

There has been remarkable progress in AI research in recent years. The progress of AI brings a tremendous opportunity, though at the same time it can potentially violate individual privacy and right to informational self-determination. The three countries participating in this joint programme share the same values. Based on the added value obtained through the collaboration of the three countries, we aim to present the direction of future digital economy and society through technical progress in AI research to strengthen trust, transparency and fairness as well as improving performance and investigating AI methods.

RESEARCH SCOPE

This call is intended to finance research projects in artificial intelligence, in the broad sense, on methodological advancement in core AI technologies and emerging AI technologies. The following themes are given as examples:

- knowledge extraction and learning: data mining and text mining, machine learning (supervised, self-supervised, unsupervised, by reinforcement, ...), complex decision rules design, decision process modeling and construction of decision support tools;
- knowledge management methods and models, including knowledge representation and theories of knowledge reasoning, ontologies and their use in data enrichment and information retrieval, multi-agent systems, and the semantic web, etc.
- advancing the state of the art in artificial intelligence in order to accomplish complex tasks (computer vision, natural language and speech processing, etc.), developing autonomous decision-making systems or allowing high-level interactions with human users.
- human-centered approaches towards artificial intelligence methods, eg. considering, trusted AI, GDPR in future AI, democratization of AI, integrity of data for fairness, AI ethics to avoid gender/age segmentation

Considerations when submitting applications

This call is intended to support collaborative projects of trilateral research teams over 3 years, bringing together research partners from France, Germany, and Japan.

Research proposals should include the benefits and the added value of trilateral cooperation.

As the three agencies intend to encourage researchers' mobility and knowledge exchange between France, Germany and Japan, consortia are asked to include concepts for integrated collaboration between partners from the three countries and cross-border networking (e.g. regular meetings of participating working groups, common workshops, exchange of researchers, etc.).

SUBMISSION

The French, German and Japanese partners will prepare a joint scientific project proposal written in English following the template provided on the ANR, DFG and JST call sites.

The project proposal must:

- Be submitted by research consortia composed of at least one eligible partner from each of the three countries, France, Germany and Japan. One partner of each country has to be defined as Leading PI (LPI), who will be the contact point for the respective national funding agency.

The following applies to partners not mentioned above (hereinafter “external partners”):

A project consortium may include external partners. External partners cannot act as LPI of a proposal and are required to secure their own budget. Proposals that include external partners must contain an alternative scenario addressing the consequences of an unsecured budget, including but not limited to, the consequences of their possible withdrawal from the proposal consortium.

- Be submitted in English by the respective LPI to ANR’s submission site, then also to JST’s submission site (e-Rad) and DFG’s elan portal;
- Be composed of a **scientific document (project description, 20 pages maximum)**, complemented by an annex presenting the short CVs of the LPs and of the key partners involved (max. 1 page per partner).

The project proposal scientific document should provide the elements necessary for its assessment according to the pre-defined evaluation criteria. The proposal must jointly present the French, the German and the Japanese contribution to the research project, including details about the roles of each team as well as the means defining their common work.

The research carried out in each country under this Initiative must abide by all applicable national and international laws and regulations, including research ethics, participation of human subjects, etc.

Each Partner is to be responsible for complying with its funding organization’s intellectual property rights requirements. The Collaboration Agreement between the Partners’ organizations will need to be in place within 6 months after the grant notification has been made. Note, that it may not restrict any of the partners in publishing their results. To avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project the Collaboration Agreement should clarify the project start date, conditions surrounding the delivery of project activities, finances and intellectual property rights (IPR).

ELIGIBILITY

The project proposal must fulfil the eligibility criteria common to the three funding agencies, as well as the criteria specific to each agency. **Project proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria, whether common to the three agencies or unique to each, cannot be funded.**

1. Common eligibility criteria

1. The project proposal must be in conformity with the designated research areas.
2. The project proposal must be submitted by a TRILATERAL consortium including at least one eligible partner for each of the three participating agencies (ANR for France, DFG for Germany and JST for Japan).

3. Enrollment of enterprises as funded partners is not allowed.
4. Each of the three agencies must receive a complete application: the common scientific document and the annex submitted respectively on the submission platforms (see the section “Submission”).
5. The project proposal must have a time range of up to three years.
6. Members of the Panel of Experts (PoE) cannot be involved in the submitted project proposals to the call in any manner.

2. Specific national eligibility criteria

For specific national eligibility criteria, please see the Regulation for partners applying for ANR support¹, German applicants² and Japanese applicants³ respectively. These national criteria concern for example the kind of project partners or regulations concerning similar projects or the number of projects a researcher can be involved in.

EVALUATION

A joint Panel of Experts (PoE) will evaluate each eligible proposal. PoE will be composed of internationally recognized, independent, responsible scientific experts nominated jointly by the three funding agencies.

The evaluation criteria are:

- Adequacy with the programme scope and designated research fields;
- scientific quality, novelty and originality of the joint research plan;
- sound project management, methodological approach, feasibility and appropriateness of the joint research plan;
- added value to be expected from the research collaboration of the partners of each country involved;
- competence and expertise of teams and complementarities of consortium (interdisciplinary / all necessary expertise);
- appropriateness of resources and funding requested;
- opportunities for early career researchers.

SELECTION AND FUNDING

Applications that are not submitted timely, complete or do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the call for proposals are to be removed from the competition.

Project proposals will be selected on the basis of a one-stage competition.

¹ <https://anr.fr/fr/appels/franco-germano-japonais-AI/modalites.pdf>

² https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/antrag_gutachter_gremien/antragstellende/index.html

³ <https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/aip/call/index.html>

Each proposal will be assigned to at least three members of the PoE who will be required to provide a written assessment with respect to the review criteria and to report on the proposals in the review meeting.

Projects can only be funded if all three agencies agree on funding.

Depending on the quality of the proposals received, the intention is to select around 10 projects for funding.

Each agency will cover expenditures for their respective country's research consortiums according to its own rules.

ANR: <https://anr.fr/fileadmin/documents/2018/ANR-RF-2018-1.pdf>

DFG: https://www.dfg.de/formulare/2_00/v/dfg_2_00_de_v1118.pdf

JST: <https://www.jst.go.jp/contract/kisoken/2019/kisokena.html>

REPORTING AND MONITORING

Each LPI will have to report to his/her respective funding agency according to specific national rules. A final report is requested in order to collect the results and impacts of funded projects. The report is to be written in English by the project LPs in collaboration with all project partners and sent to the call secretariat (ANR).

The final report shall be produced in English jointly by the three LPs in the format provided by the call secretariat (ANR).

In addition, a kick off and a final review meetings of all funded projects will be organized. The participation of each consortium is mandatory and a budget should be foreseen accordingly in the budget of the project.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The estimated contribution of each participating agency is as follows:

Organization	Estimated Contribution
ANR	€ 2.5 M
DFG	€ 2.5 M
JST	JPY 300 M (approx. € 2.4 M)

SCHEDULE

Publication of call for proposals	July 30, 2019
Deadline for submission of project proposals	October 25, 2019
Official funding decisions taken and notifications of applicants	March 2020
Begin of projects	March 2020 at the earliest
End of projects	2023