



Economic and Social Research Council



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Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada



Open Research Area for the Social Sciences Eighth Call for Proposals 2023

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document sets out answers to a range of frequently asked questions (FAQ) which potential applicants may have. It may be updated while the call is open to elaborate or supplement answers, in response to received queries. However, the FAQ is a supplement to, not substitute for, the details provided in the call specification and associated guidance documents. These are available at the call webpage at: <https://www.dfg.de/ora>.

Contents

Questions on who can apply to the call.....	3
Q1. Who can submit a proposal to ORA 8?	3
Q2. Can I be involved in more than one ORA application?	3
Q3. Can any organisation submit a proposal?	3
Q.4 Are investigators from outside of the four countries eligible to be included in the scheme?	3
Q.5 How many applicants may be included in a proposal?	3
Q.6 Why do we need to name a main applicant?	4
Questions on what can be applied for in this call.....	4
Q.7 How much can be applied for in this call?.....	4
Q.8 How long can a grant last?.....	4
Q.9 Should costs be broken down in detail or proposed as a lump-sum amount?	4
Q.10 Should inflation be included within the project budget?	4
Q.11 Can project management time and costs be included in the proposal?.....	5
Questions on general research eligibility	5
Q.12 Are there certain types of research that are considered more suitable for this call?.....	5
Q.13 Are scientific infrastructure or networking activities allowed?	5
Q.14 What type of research can be funded?	5
Q.15 Can disciplines outside of the social sciences be included in the project proposals?	5
Q.16 Are proposals linked to projects that have been funded by other organisations acceptable?.....	5
Q.17 Is it possible to apply for funding from this call if a proposal builds on previous research?	5
Q.18 Is it acceptable to include researchers from disciplines outside the social sciences?	6
Q.19 Do proposals have to be multi-disciplinary?	6
Questions about the application process	6

Q.20 Where can I download the application templates?	6
Q.21 Are proposals submitted to each individual agency?.....	6
Q.22 In what language(s) should the proposals be submitted?	6
Q.23 May supplementary information or appendices be added to the proposal?.....	6
Q.24 When can projects start?	6
Q.25 What are the national financial forms for and how should they be submitted?	6
Q.26 How many national partners should there be in a project? Will a project with a higher number of national partners be treated preferentially?	7
Q.27 Is Japan included in the minimum three or more ORA countries required?	7
Q.28 What is the difference between the main applicant, applicant and co-applicant?	7
Q.29 Do you accept late applications?	7
Questions about the assessment process.....	7
Q.30 How does the assessment process work?	7
Q.31 Will the JSPS element of the proposal be assessed?.....	7
Q.32 What happens if the Japanese element to my project is dependent on being funded by JSPS? How will the ORA peer reviews evaluate my proposal if JSPS funding is ultimately declined?	8
Q.33 What are the assessment criteria?	8
Other questions	8
Q.34 How many applications were successful in the previous seven rounds?	8
Q.35 Is there a list of projects funded in the previous round?.....	8
Q.36 If there are ethical issues, is approval required before submitting a proposal?	8
Q.37 How will successful ORA projects be monitored by the funding agencies?.....	8

Questions on who can apply to the call

Q1. Who can submit a proposal to ORA 8?

Since eligibility criteria are subject to national regulations, these criteria are described in the country specific requirements (section 9 of the *Call Specification*). If you are unsure, please contact the relevant national contact officers prior to submitting a proposal.

Q2. Can I be involved in more than one ORA application?

Project applicants (i.e., main applicant, applicants, and co-applicants) can only be involved in one proposal in the current round as a project applicant. It is the responsibility of applicants (including the main applicant) to ascertain that the project applicants are compliant with this rule. **If any individual appears as project applicant in more than one application, all applications will be declared ineligible and rejected by the Call Secretariat.** Project applicants in one proposal may still be involved in any number of proposals as either team members or cooperation partners.

Q3. Can any organisation submit a proposal?

Proposals must be submitted by individuals (applicants), not institutions. The call is open to proposals from eligible applicants from three or four of the subscribing countries, i.e., Canada, France, Germany, and the UK. All applicants should check institutional eligibility rules of each participating agency and/or contact national contact person for further details. There is no limit to the number of individuals (applicants) who can submit proposals from a given institution.

Q.4 Are investigators from outside of the four countries eligible to be included in the scheme?

Some of the partner agencies allow for other international collaborators to be included within the terms of their normal research grants. These policies will apply to co-applicants outside the four countries if the work of these researchers is most closely aligned with the national research team for which such collaborations are allowed. For example, for ESRC, the policy on international co-applicants (to be found here <https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/international-co-investigator-policy-guidance/>) will apply, provided that these researchers work most closely with the UK research team. For DFG, regulations for cooperation with developing countries will apply. For SSHRC, researchers from international postsecondary institutions can participate as co-applicants, while any international individual can participate as a collaborator. You will need to check the eligibility rules of the national agency with which researchers outside the four countries are most naturally aligned for confirmation of eligibility.

If you have researchers from outside of the four countries whose costs are not covered by the funders' national terms and conditions (as above) but who have agreed to cooperate with your project, you should list their details in the cooperation partners sections in the *Proposal Template*, section 2. Please note that no funding can be requested to cover research from cooperation partners, but some funders may cover essential travel costs.

There is a possibility for the cooperation partners in Japan (if applicable) to obtain a special funding from a Japanese funding agency. The Japan Society of the Promotion of Science (JSPS) will provide an independent funding opportunity on application basis to support the cooperation partners in Japan involved in the successful proposals.

Q.5 How many applicants may be included in a proposal?

Each national sub-team will have an applicant in that country, who must be clearly identified in the *Proposal Template*, section 2. Applicants will act as national contact points with their national funding agencies and fulfil the role of an applicant as defined in the rules of their agency. Apart from the national applicants, there might be other applicants who also request funding. These applicants are per definition co-applicants. There is not

supposed to be any sort of hierarchy between applicants and co-applicants but, depending on national rules, the applicants might be accountable for specific duties with regard to their funding agency.

There is no limit to the number of participants that can be involved in the project, but all team members must make a significant contribution to the conduct of the research.

Q.6 Why do we need to name a main applicant?

For administrative reasons only, one of the applicants will act as main applicant and submit the proposals on behalf of all project partners. The Call Secretariat will direct communications about the progress of the application to this person only, and the main applicants are therefore responsible for informing the other parties in the application.

Questions on what can be applied for in this call

Q.7 How much can be applied for in this call?

All budget items must conform to the national rules relevant for each applicant. The total value of proposals requested from each national agency should not exceed the funding limit for that agency. The following funding limits will apply: ANR: Up to €450,000; DFG: No maximum limit, but keep in mind that this is a regular research grant (Sachbeihilfe), not a Research Unit (Forschungsgruppe) or a Collaborative Research Centre (Sonderforschungsbereich); ESRC: From minimum £200,000 to maximum £600,000 (at 100% fEC, ESRC will meet 80% of the fEC); SSHRC: Up to \$600,000 (maximum \$200,000 per year).

Q.8 How long can a grant last?

This call allows proposals for projects between 24 and 36 months. What the research is focused on and how it will be conducted will determine the most appropriate length for a grant. Value for money will be a criterion of assessment in reaching funding decisions.

Q.9 Should costs be broken down in detail or proposed as a lump-sum amount?

Applicants should report the total amount of funds requested for the project per agency, using the *Proposal Template*, section 4. These amounts must be fully justified in section 5 of the same document. In the “Justification of resources” (section 5), you are required to provide a detailed breakdown and explanation of why the indicated resources are needed. This section should explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the research proposed, taking into account the nature and complexity of the research proposal. It should not be simply a list of the resources required. Where an itemised breakdown and justification is not provided, these costs will be removed from any grant made.

In addition to the information provided in the *Proposal Template*, applicants from Canada and the UK are required to fill out the *ESRC Finance Form* and the *SSHRC Finance Form* for the funds requested, and to upload the forms as separate documents to SSHRC’s Convergence application form. The ESRC and SSHRC Finance Form templates are available on the [ORA 8 website](#). Applicants from France requesting funding from the ANR are expected to complete the full financial form in the ANR’s SIM application form. Applicants from Germany are required to upload their proposals via the DFG elan system and specify their budget there.

Q.10 Should inflation be included within the project budget?

No, inflation costs must not be included within the project budget. All costs must be entered at the prices at the time of submission. Successful grants may have an allowance for inflation, calculated using standard indices depending on national financial regulations (although this does not apply for all participating funding agencies).

Q.11 Can project management time and costs be included in the proposal?

Yes, if this is appropriate for your proposal you must justify time and cost within your proposal.

Questions on general research eligibility

Q.12 Are there certain types of research that are considered more suitable for this call?

No. All projects must focus on substantive research and feature an integrated work programme demonstrating clearly the added value of transnational collaboration. The funding agencies expect that each partner contributes substantially to the common project topic, including taking responsibilities for the project design and organization. These contributions should also be reflected in a reasonable amount of requested funds by each partner.

Proposals may be submitted in any area of the social sciences within the remit of the relevant national agencies concerned (please see section 9 in the *Call Specification* document for additional information concerning each agency).

Q.13 Are scientific infrastructure or networking activities allowed?

Scientific infrastructure or networking activities can only be funded within projects with a substantive research focus. As stand-alone projects, infrastructure or networking projects will not be eligible and will be rejected.

Q.14 What type of research can be funded?

Applications can be for basic research and national agencies are keen to encourage fresh ideas from early career as well as from established researchers. Research proposals cannot be accepted for the following: unspecified research work, research already carried out, writing up previous research, stand-alone literature surveys, conference attendance, travel for general study, unsolicited requests to hold conferences, workshops or seminars, preparation of books and publications, or primarily for the preparation and production of materials such as curriculum materials and software development.

However, within a research application the inclusion of literature surveys, conferences, seminars, workshops, and preparation of books and publications and other types of output are acceptable as long as the need for any of these is fully justified and these activities clearly support and/or disseminate the production of new research.

Q.15 Can disciplines outside of the social sciences be included in the project proposals?

Yes, they can if they are an integral part of and support the research questions and theme. However, the proposal should be predominantly within the social sciences. If you have any doubt as to whether your proposal is predominantly within the social sciences, please contact the agencies to which your proposal will be submitted for confirmation. Note, also, that the disciplinary coverage varies according to the involvement of the national agencies (especially SSHRC). If you have any doubt, check to ensure the disciplinary scope of your proposal is eligible with all agencies involved.

Q.16 Are proposals linked to projects that have been funded by other organisations acceptable?

Yes, although such proposals must be a discrete piece of work that can be judged on their own merits and does not duplicate previous work. It is important that the proposal still proposes new and cutting-edge research of the highest quality. It would be expected that in such instances applicants will demonstrate where there may be added synergies and added value between the two projects.

Q.17 Is it possible to apply for funding from this call if a proposal builds on previous research?

Yes, although it is important that the proposal still proposes new and cutting-edge research of the highest

quality. Such proposals must be a discrete piece of work that can be judged on their own merits and does not duplicate previous work. It would be expected that in such instances applicants will demonstrate where there may be added synergies and value between the two projects.

Q.18 Is it acceptable to include researchers from disciplines outside the social sciences?

Yes, if this is relevant to the research project.

Q.19 Do proposals have to be multi-disciplinary?

No. Mono-, multi- and interdisciplinary proposals are all welcome. What is important is that the disciplinary approach is appropriate to address the specific research questions.

Where research teams do cut across disciplines, it is important that enough time and resource are allocated to make sure that strong working partnerships can be built up and maintained, and that collaboration is meaningful and productive. It is advisable for these teams to have a proven record of joint inter- or multidisciplinary work.

Questions about the application process

Q.20 Where can I download the application templates?

Application templates along with all relevant ORA 8 literature can be found on [ORA 8 website](#).

Q.21 Are proposals submitted to each individual agency?

SSHRC is the coordinating agency for this round and all applications must be submitted online through SSHRC's [Convergence Portal](#).

Applicants requesting funding from ANR are required to additionally submit their proposals through the ANR [SIM platform](#).

Applicants requesting funding from DFG are required to additionally submit their proposals through the DFG [elan](#) system.

Researchers from the UK are not required to submit the application to ESRC. (Though note that post funding decision, all successful UK applicants will be required to complete an additional submission to ESRC via TFS (the Funding Service) for administrative purposes as a condition of access to UK ESRC funding).

Q.22 In what language(s) should the proposals be submitted?

All proposals must be written in English, with the exception of proposals including Canadian partners, which may be submitted in French. Applicants wishing to submit in French should get in touch with the national contact at SSHRC for further details.

Q.23 May supplementary information or appendices be added to the proposal?

Only those specifically requested in the *Call Specification* document. **Word and page limits should be strictly adhered to.** Additional diagrams, charts and tables should not be provided.

Q.24 When can projects start?

The earliest starting date for successful projects is October 1st, 2024, the latest is March 31st, 2025. All national research teams within a project will be expected to start at the same time.

Q.25 What are the national financial forms for and how should they be submitted?

The financial forms summarize the costs directed to each national funding agency.

Applicants from Canada and the UK are required to fill out the *ESRC Finance Form* and the *SSHRC Finance form*, respectively, for the funds requested, and to upload the forms as separate documents to SSHRC's Convergence application form. The ESRC and SSHRC Finance Form templates are available on the [ORA 8 website](#).

Applicants from France requesting funding from the ANR are expected to complete the full finance form in the ANR's SIM platform; they will upload their proposals to both SSHRC's Convergence Portal and ANR's SIM platform by the deadline for submitting proposals. Applicants from Germany are required to upload their proposals via the DFG elan system by the deadline for submitting proposals and specify their budget there.

Q.26 How many national partners should there be in a project? Will a project with a higher number of national partners be treated preferentially?

As long as there are partners from three or four ORA countries (excluding Japan), the precise configuration should be determined by the research question and project design. There is no ideal number and applicants should not add partners just to bolster numbers. All partners should have a significant role in the research.

Q.27 Is Japan included in the minimum three or more ORA countries required?

No, Japan is not included in the required number of ORA countries. You will need to have a minimum of three ORA participating countries, i.e. Canada, France, Germany, and the UK.

Q.28 What is the difference between the main applicant, applicant and co-applicant?

The main applicant is one of the applicants, selected for administrative reasons, who submits the application through SSHRC's Convergence Portal for the whole project. The main applicant also acts as a main contact point with the Call Secretariat for all matters related to the proposal as a whole.

The applicant is the national head responsible for the funding contracts with their agency. There can be one applicant per country.

The co-applicants are any individuals who make a significant contribution to the intellectual direction of the research, who play a significant role in the conduct of the research, and who may also have some responsibility for financial aspects of the research.

Q.29 Do you accept late applications?

No. All proposals must be submitted by the deadline of November 14th 2023.

Questions about the assessment process

Q.30 How does the assessment process work?

This call will follow a one-stage procedure consisting of a full proposal. Eligible proposals will be sent for assessment to external, independent referees for peer review. Based on those reviews, proposals will be discussed by an international commissioning panel, consisting of experts nominated by the four funding agencies. For more details about the decision-making process, please consult the *Call Specification* document, section 4.

Q.31 Will the JSPS element of the proposal be assessed?

The Japan component will be evaluated and decided upon by JSPS, in light of its association with ORA. The ORA-proposal will be evaluated as a stand-alone proposal by the ORA partners and funding decisions will be made independently. There is no strategic advantage or disadvantage to planning a project with partners from Japan.

Q.32 What happens if the Japan element to my project is dependent on being funded by JSPS? How will the ORA peer reviews evaluate my proposal if JSPS funding is ultimately declined?

Both projects will be evaluated separately. ORA proposals will not be dependent on the Japan component being funded. If the ORA project is assessed positively, the project will be funded by the European partners even if JSPS declines to fund the Japan teams.

Q.33 What are the assessment criteria?

Please see the assessment criteria in section 5 of the *Call Specification* document for details of the criteria according to which external assessors and panel members review the proposals.

Other questions

Q.34 How many applications were successful in the previous seven rounds?

Here are some stats related to the previous seven rounds of ORA:

#	Received	Eligible	Funded
ORA 1	139	123	15
ORA 2	160	142	10
ORA 3	186	178	15
ORA 4	188	188	20
ORA 5	319	293	16
ORA 6	103	95	13
ORA 7	99	92	13

Q.35 Is there a list of projects funded in the previous round?

Yes, results for ORA 1-7 are available [here](#). Please be mindful that due to the open nature of this call, previously funded projects only reflect the topics and quality of applications in that specific round and should not be used as an indication of what might be funded in future rounds.

Q.36 If there are ethical issues, is approval required before submitting a proposal?

The requirements and timings for ethical approval vary between agencies. Proposals must adhere to the ethical requirements for each relevant national agency.

Q.37 How will successful ORA projects be monitored by the funding agencies?

Each national research team will be expected to report to its national funding agency, in accordance with each agency's regulation. In addition, all successful applicants in the ORA 8 call will be required to complete a joint final report on their project after the grant ends. Further details on the format and deadlines for submission of the final report will be communicated to all successful applicants at contracting stage.