

GERMAN-FRENCH

JOINT CALL FOR PROPOSALS ON

“Artificial Intelligence”

within the framework of the collaboration between the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

Open jointly by the MESRI (via ANR) and BMBF (via PT-DLR)

Opening date:

23rd October 2020

Closing date:

December 21st 13:00 CET

Link to the call on the ANR website:

<https://anr.fr/BilateralDEFRIA-2021>

Link to the call on the BMBF website:

<https://www.softwaresysteme.pt-dlr.de/de/deutsch-franzoesische-kooperation.php>

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Applicants are advised to read carefully the entire document as well as the corresponding national documents (German call for proposals and National regulations for French applicants) before submitting research project proposals.

CONTEXT AND GENERAL DISPOSITIONS

With reference to the Aachen Treaty between Germany and France, this funding measure is intended to contribute to cooperation in the field of research and digital change, in particular in the field of Artificial Intelligence. Both Germany and France are facing the challenge that results from AI basic research are not or only to a limited extent transferred to fields of application.

Therefore, cooperation is a key element for raising visibility for AI players with regard to the national AI strategies established in both countries.

In the Joint Declaration of Intent between the Ministry for Higher Education and Research of the French Republic and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research on the Franco-German Research and Innovation Network on AI, both sides have reaffirmed their will to create a common AI ecosystem in order to create new collaborative projects. Together, they will combine their efforts on the basis of their national strategies to create the relevant landscape for new research and industry cooperation projects.

The joint network will lead to better understanding of what is needed in the field of AI. Both governments will jointly introduce their findings to European and international work on AI.

Hence, this bilateral Call for Proposals on AI aims to fund projects promoting high-quality research collaborations between France and Germany.

CHALLENGE AND SCOPE OF THE CALL

Challenge

The present call aims at supporting collaborative research on current challenges in AI and should address – without being limited to – one or more of the following topics:

- Distributed AI like, e.g., federated learning or edge computing
- Green AI that requires less resources, e.g., algorithms requiring less energy, less memory, less communication bandwidth
- Hybrid AI, e.g., combining machine learning and knowledge
- AI towards other sciences, e.g., AI & numerical simulations, AI & physics, AI & chemistry...
- Trustable AI, e.g., certifiable, explainable, or interpretable models and processing pipelines
- AI for leading edge technologies, e.g., dialog systems for media access

Scope

Proposals should relate - without being limited - to one or more of the following application domains:

- Mobility & Transport
- Logistics & Services
- Energy (in particular renewable energy)
- Environment and Resource Protection
- Smart Industry & Production Technologies
- Smart Health
- Robotics
- Society

Applications with focus on military use are excluded from this funding measure.

Programme Structure

This call aims at funding two different instruments of projects both on the scope defined above:

Type 1 Research Collaborations

This instrument is intended to support the framework for strengthening Franco-German partnerships, and to give priority to supporting joint programmes between two institutions.

Research cooperation between partners is for establishing a close relationship in terms of a basic agreement that can be instantiated in an agile manner by measures of interaction and exchange in the long term. The research should focus on methodology.

Projects will have a duration of up to 4 years.

Type 2 Research and Development Project

This instrument is intended that the project results shall contribute to the development of pre-competitive and applied results for products, processes and / or technical services.

With this funding measure, both countries will support Research and Development projects aimed at the innovative application of AI methods in practice. The funding of collaborative projects is intended to strengthen the transfer between science and industry to the advantage of the involved partners in both countries.

Projects will have a duration of up to 3 years.

SUBMISSION

The French and German partners will prepare a joint project proposal structure- different for the two types - provided below.

The project proposal must:

- Be submitted by research consortia composed of both one **French coordinator** and one **German coordinator**, who will each be the contact point for the respective national funding agency.
- Be submitted as one proposal per bilateral consortium to both (<https://aap.agencerecherche.fr/layouts/15/SIM/Pages/SIMNouveauProjet.aspx?idAAP=1610> and <https://ptoutline.eu/app/KI-DEU-FRA>)
- Be composed of a document (project description, 15 pages maximum), complemented by an annex presenting the short CVs of the national project leaders and of the key researchers involved (max. 1 page per partner).

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

Type 1 Research Collaborations Proposals

The common project proposal shall be structured as follows [max 15pp. + annexes]

- Project title, Acronym, keywords, duration, partners
- Project One-Page Description (in French and German)
- Bilateral partnership programme (general presentation of the joint AI strategy, main objectives, AI research axis)
- Context and positioning
 - Scientific & technical context (incl. AI national strategies)
 - Presentation of the French partner
 - Integration of the bilateral partnership in the strategy of the French partner
 - Presentation of the German partner
 - Integration of the bilateral partnership in the strategy of the German partner
 - added value of the cooperation
- Detailed roadmap of the cooperation (detailed scientific and technical content & teams involved, max 5 pages),
- Governance and resources to be committed
 - Governance of the cooperation
 - Resources mobilized (personnel, platforms, software, data, experimental facilities ...)
- Anticipated medium-long term impact
 - Expected impacts with respect to the national AI research strategies

- Protection of results, TTO activities and sustainability of the bilateral partnership
- Communication & dissemination plan
- Financial tables
- Annexes
- CV of PIs (at least)

Type 2 Research and Development Project Proposals

The common project proposal shall be structured as follows [max 15pp. + annexes]

- Project title, Acronym, keywords, duration, partners (table, 1 page)
- Project One-Page Description (in French and German)
- Project overview
 - Rationale of the project
 - Problem statement, solution and challenges
 - Project innovations and technology value chain
 - R&D
 - State-of-the-Art (SotA) analysis
 - Proposed technological innovation and scientific novelty in relation to the SotA
 - Expected project outputs
 - Quantified objectives and quantification criteria
 - Targeted Impact
 - Consortium overview
- Work description
 - Work package descriptions
 - Main milestones
- Rationale for public funding
- Exploitation and dissemination plan
- Summary of costs & effort breakdown
- Annexes
 - Lol (optional)

A **Consortium Agreement (CA)** has to be signed by all consortium members within the first year of the project for the 2 types. It will be the responsibility of the consortium coordinators to draw up a CA in order to fix a common project start date, manage the delivery of the project activities, finances, intellectual property rights (IPR) and to avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project.

ELIGIBILITY

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

funded. Every partner can submit to either type 1 or type 2. Project proposals may be declared ineligible at any stage of the process. When analyzing eligibility, the information entered online shall take precedence over that indicated in the project description if these two sources of information conflict with each other, and if the information is incorrectly indicated or missing¹.

1. Common eligibility criteria

Type 1 Research Collaborations

Applicants: French and German higher education or research institutions; each project must have one partner in each country.

Type 2 Research and Development Project

Applicants: French and German higher education or research institutions as well as industrial partners; each project must have at least one partner of each group in each country.

The applications must follow one of the two types of instruments.

2. Specific national eligibility criteria

For specific national eligibility criteria, please see the National regulations for French applicants and German applicants² 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 evaluation committee will evaluate each eligible proposal. PRP will be composed of German and French recognized, independent, responsible scientific experts nominated jointly by both countries.

Type 1 Research Collaborations

Criteria	Description of the criteria
Quality and efficiency of the implementation	Quality of the partners and of the teams mobilized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “legitimacy/credibility” in AI and in the proposed domain of cooperation Resources mobilized by the partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel • Other e.g. platforms, software, data, experimental facilities, ...

¹ No data may be edited after the closure date and time for the call for proposals. Data is entered subject to the direct liability of the coordinators, who must plan ahead for submission and allocate the necessary time.)

² <https://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/>

	Balanced cooperation in terms of resources and benefits Appropriateness of the governance Appropriateness of the requested funding
Excellence of innovation and R&D	Quality/interest of the bilateral cooperation project Degree of innovation of the proposed research Quality of the work program, clarity and relevance of the objectives
Impact	Relevance with respect to the national strategies and priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI methodological priorities • Application priorities (e.g. health, environment, sciences, mobility, Industry 4.0 ...) Added value of the cooperation, anticipated impact for the partners and for the French-German cooperation Effectiveness of the protection/exploitation of results and dissemination strategies Appropriateness of the management of ethical aspects, if any

Type 2 Research and Development Project Proposals

Criteria	Description of the criteria
R&D innovation, technical excellence and societal relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of innovation of the scientific and technical concept • Scientific and technical quality of the solution • Assessment of the social, economic and environmental opportunities and risks associated with scientific and technological innovations
Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the science and technology approach as well as work plan • Implementation concept with presentation of the R&D approach • Possibilities of economic and timely implementation within the timeframe and budget, implementation risks
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management and consortium structure • Qualification of the partners • Added value from bilateral cooperation
Exploitation and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the proposed solution for scientific and industrial applications • Scientific and economic potential • Contribution of the project partners to the future • Quality and feasibility of the dissemination and exploitation plan

SELECTION AND FUNDING

Each agency will cover expenditures for their respective country's research consortiums according to its own rules. A consortium agreement must be provided for the two types.

ANR's funding regulations are available at: <https://anr.fr/fr/rf/>

BMBF's funding regulations are available at: https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare

REPORTING AND MONITORING

Each coordinator will have to report to his/her respective funding agency according to specific national rules.

However, both national agencies encourage coordinators to work together in order to align the content of their formal mid-term and final reports to the extent possible.

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.

Budget

Its own National Authority will give the funding support to each eligible partner. Eligible expenses will respectively be funded by each country, according to the specific national rules. Details can be found in the German call for proposals³ and ANR's funding regulations^{4 5}.

Each agency makes a contribution of 5 Million euros for this call. The requested budget for the type 1 projects should be between 300k and 400k euros and for the type 2 projects between 600k and 800k euros.

SCHEDULE

- Submission of full proposals (both submission websites (ANR, DLR Projektträger):

³ <https://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/>

⁴ <https://anr.fr/fr/rf/>

⁵ In case of discrepancies between this document and national documents, the latter are legally binding



- Opening of the submission website: 23rd October 2020
- Closing: December 21st 2020
- Joint decision and publication of results: end of March 2021
- Tentative project launch time: 1st of July 2021