

**Notice of the Ministry of Science and Technology on
Application Guidelines for the "Inter-governmental Science and Technology Innovation
(STI) Cooperation Special Programme" of the National Key R&D Programme for 2020¹**

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In accordance with the overall arrangements of the Reform of the National S&T Funding Programmes of the State Council (Guo Fa [2014] No. 64) and relevant requirements laid out for the National Key R&D Programme (NKP), the Application Guidelines for year 2020 are hereby published under the NKP Inter-governmental Science and Technology Innovation Cooperation Special Programme. Please organise project applications based on the requirements set out in the Guidelines. Relevant issues are notified as the following.

I. Procedures of project applications

1. Applicants will submit proposals in the forms of projects in line with the research areas provided in the Guidelines. No tasks (or topics) to be established under projects, proposals should be submitted as projects covering all the indicators provided in the Guidelines. Project application entities should nominate one researcher as Principal Investigator.
2. Evaluation of proposals for NKP projects will be conducted in two stages including pre-applications and formal applications. Detailed procedures are as follows:
 - In line with relevant requirements provided in the Guidelines, applicants shall fill up and submit the pre-application forms via the portal of National S&T Information System. The pre-application within the limit of about 3000 characters should provide detailed explanations on the objectives and indicators of the proposed projects, brief introduction on the innovative ideas, technology roadmaps and basis of research, and attach relevant annexes as requested. The duration from the date of guideline publication to the deadline of pre-application submission shall not be less than 50 days.
 - Applicant entities should sign joint application agreements with all participating entities with indication on dates of signature. Application entities should sign commitment letters of integrity with Principal Investigators. Project applicants and all participating entities should fulfil the requirements set forth in the Several Opinions on Further Strengthening Scientific Research Integrity, reinforce checks on applications, and eliminate exaggerations, inaccuracies and falsifications.
 - Recommending entities should strengthen checks on the project applications to be recommended and submit projects at their recommendation timely via the portal of National S&T Information System.
 - After receipt of project pre-applications, China S&T Exchange Centre (CSTEC) will organise administrative checks and first round of review. No proposal defense by Principal Investigators is requested for the first round of review. Based on the results of expert review and external consultation, 3 to 4 times of the number of projects to be funded will be selected for the next stage of review. Review results will be notified to those applications that fail to enter the next stage review.

¹ Unofficial translation for reference only, please refer to the website of MOST for call details:
https://service.most.gov.cn/kjih_tztg_all/20200423/3332.html

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- Applicants notified by CSTECC of defense reviews shall fill up and submit full proposals via the National S&T Information System within the duration of 30 days.
- CSTECC will organise administrative checks and defense reviews for full proposals. Principal Investigators of project applications will give defense presentations through web video. Projects will be selected based on the results of expert review taking into account external consultations.

II Recommending entities

1. S&T departments and bureaus of relevant administrations of the State Council;
2. S&T administrations of provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities and cities;
3. Industrial associations transformed from industrial administrations;
4. Strategic industrial technology innovation alliances of A type listed as pilots by Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), and pilots of S&T service alliances listed by MOST and Ministry of Finance

Recommending entities should propose application proposals within their mandates and should be responsible for the authenticity of the recommended projects. Relevant administrations of the State Council will recommend those entities of their professional affiliates. Industrial associations, strategic industrial technology innovation alliances and pilot alliances of S&T services will recommend their members. Provincial S&T administrations recommend entities within their administrative scope. The list of recommending entities is published at the National S&T Information System Public Service Platform.

III Application eligibility requirements

1. Lead applicants and participating entities should be research institutes, universities and enterprises registered in Chinese mainland with independent legal person status before 31 March 2019, with competent R&D capacities, solid foundation for international cooperation, and sound operational management. Government agencies cannot lead or participate in applications.

Project lead applicants, participating entities and project team members should have good integrity status, and have no records of severe research dishonesty under punishment nor relevant social credit "blacklist" records.

The proposal should be recommended by one recommending entity only and should not be submitted through multiple or duplicate channels.

2. Principal investigators should hold senior professional titles or PhD degrees, born after 1 January 1960, with at least 6 months of working time dedicated to the proposed projects.
3. Principal investigators should in principle be the proposers of the main research ideas of the proposed projects and the scientists who lead practical research activities. Public service staff (including those undertaking S&T programme administration functions) in central and local government agencies cannot apply for projects.
4. Principal Investigators can only submit for one project. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) under the National Major S&T Projects, National Key R&D Programmes and STI 2030 Major Projects cannot lead project applications. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (excluding leaders for tasks or topics) under the National Key R&D Programmes and STI 2030 Major Projects cannot participate in project applications

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either. Principal Investigators and key project team members can lead or participate in one project only under this Programme.

The total numbers of projects applied for and ongoing projects undertaken by Principal Investigators and key project team members under the National Key R&D Programmes, or STI 2030 Major Projects should not exceed two. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) under the National Major S&T Projects, National Key R&D Programmes or STI 2030 Major Projects, should not withdraw from projects (including tasks or topics) currently undertaken due to applications for projects under the National Key R&D Programmes. In principle, during the project implementation, after withdrawal from the project team, principal investigators and key members of ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) of the National Major S&T Projects, National Key R&D Programmes, and STI 2030 Major Projects, cannot lead or participate in the applications for new projects under the National Key R&D Programmes.

Ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) with implementation durations (including those extended) until 31 December 2020 are not covered by the project number limit.

5. Members of Advisory Committee cannot apply for projects. Experts that participated in the formulation of the Special Programme implementation plans or application guidelines of the current year cannot apply for projects under this Special Programme.
6. Scientists of foreign nationalities recruited by Chinese mainland entities and scientists from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan can be Principal Investigators. Employees under full recruitment conditions should provide valid full recruitment documentations issued by the Chinese mainland employers, while employees under part-time recruitment conditions should provide valid recruitment documentations issued by both employers, which should be submitted in the pre-applications.
7. In principle, once project proposals are received, applicant entities and principal investigators cannot be changed.
8. Project cooperation content and modalities should comply with relevant laws and regulations as well as scientific research ethical rules of China and the countries (regions, international organisations) of cooperation partners. For the cooperation activities that need prior approvals, for example those involving human genetic resources or germplasm resources, application entities must fulfil relevant examination and approval procedures beforehand in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. Projects can only be launched when all necessary procedures are completed.
9. Detailed application requirements are provided in the project application guidelines.

Before submitting proposals, applicants can search for information on the ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) undertaken by relevant researchers in the National Major S&T Projects, National Key R&D Programmes, or STI 2030 Major Projects, via the National S&T Information System Public Services Platform so as to avoid duplicate applications.

IV Specific application methods

1. Online submission. Paperless application for this call. Applicant entities should strictly follow the national and local epidemic prevention and control requirements, create innovative ways of work, make full use of video conferences, and online office platforms to form research teams, and minimise gatherings. Proposals should be filled up and

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submitted via the National S&T Information System Public Service Platform (<http://service.most.gov.cn>). CSTECC will organise administrative checks and project reviews on the basis of the application forms submitted online. Annexes requested in the submissions should be scanned and uploaded. If unable to do so due to the epidemic, applicants should provide and upload scans of explanatory notes. CSTECC shall notify the applicants to provide later taking into consideration of the situation.

Online submission of pre-applications will be open from 6 May 08:00 to 15 June 2020 16:00. Applicants that pass first round reviews will fill up full proposals as per request and submit online via the National S&T Information System. Specific timing and relevant requirements will be notified separately.

2. Recommending organisations are requested to confirm recommended projects and upload scans of the recommendation letters with official stamps via the National S&T Information System before 22 June 2020 16:00.
3. For technical inquiries:
010-58882999 (operator); program@istic.ac.cn
4. Inquiries on Inter-governmental STI Cooperation Programme: 010-68598010; zjf@cstec.org.cn

Annex:

Application Guidelines for the "Inter-governmental Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Cooperation Special Programme" of the National Key R&D Programme for 2020

Annex:

Application Guidelines for the "Inter-governmental Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Cooperation Special Programme" of National Key R&D Programme for 2020

A Summary for Reference²

The list below is a summary of the projects called under the application guidelines, with indication of the countries/regions, areas, number of projects to be funded and budget to be allocated. The call will support S&T cooperation with 9 countries, regions, international organisations and multilateral cooperation mechanisms. About 78 to 81 projects will be supported with a total national allocated budget of RMB 280 million, duration per project being 2 to 3 years.

Cooperation with	Areas	Number of projects to be funded	Budget to be allocated (RMB)
Australia	Food and agricultural economy; digital technology; energy and resources; advanced materials	4 to 6	30 million
Cuba	Nano science and technology; life sciences; agriculture (including hybrid rice)	5	15 million
EU	Flagship Initiatives: - Food, agriculture and biotechnologies under the EU Horizon 2020 call for proposals: SFS-40-2020: Healthy soils for healthy food production - Environment and sustainable urbanisation under the EU Horizon 2020 call for proposals: SC5-27-2020: Strengthening international cooperation on sustainable urbanisation: enhanced natural treatment solutions for water security and ecological quality of water in cities	4	60 million
	Other priorities: New generation information network; intelligent and green manufacturing; safe, clean and efficient energy; advanced, effective, safe and convenient health technologies; marine equipment; space; new materials; large scientific research infrastructures; public security	30	90 million
Denmark	Energy and storage; smart cities and transport;	4 to 5	20 million
Italy	Marine technology; modern precision agriculture; ICT – AI in intelligent manufacturing; personalised medicine and innovative biological materials in medical apparatus	4	1.6 million
Malta	Maritime services, maritime technology and aquaculture research; transport research; digital technology	3	4.8 million
Japan (RIKEN)	No limit	10	30 million
The Philippines	Renewable energies; agriculture; health; and others	8	8 million
Russia	Large research facilities; biology and biopharmaceuticals; physiology and basic medicine; resource and environment; plasma physics; material science; chemistry	6	18 million

² Unofficial translation summary based on the Application Guidelines for reference only, please refer to the website of MOST for details of the call notice and application guidelines: https://service.most.gov.cn/kjih_tztg_all/20200423/3332.html

China-EU Research and Innovation Flagship Initiatives

Cooperation agreement: Administrative Arrangement between the Directorate General for Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Science and Technology of China on a Co-funding Mechanism for the period 2018-2020 to support Collaborative Research and Innovation Projects under Joint Flagship Initiatives and other areas

Areas:

1. Food, agriculture and biotechnology: EU's Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2020 Call SFS-40-2020: Healthy soils for healthy food production;
2. Environment and Sustainable Urbanisation, EU Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2020 Call SC5-27-2020: Strengthening international cooperation on sustainable urbanisation: Enhanced natural treatment solutions for water security and ecological quality of water in cities.

Number of projects to be supported: 4 projects

Fund to be allocated: 60 million RMB

Other requirements:

1. The EU-China STI Flagship Initiative projects aim to support equal and mutually beneficial large scientific research cooperation in priority areas jointly defined. In the above areas indicated by the corresponding calls, the EU side will support cooperation with China only;
2. Both sides in the projects should submit their proposals to the entities announcing the calls on the Chinese and European side respectively in response to the priority areas with corresponding calls mentioned above. Proposals submitted to one side will not be eligible;
3. Each project should include at least three independent Chinese participants without subordinate relationships. Inter-sectoral cooperation among industries, education and research institutions and joint applications with enterprises are encouraged. Participating enterprises should provide supplementary funds at a level at least equivalent to government funds. Each proposal should correspond to a clearly identified Horizon 2020 project, define one Chinese lead participant and PI, and submit one Chinese application. Chinese applicants should be formal partners in Horizon 2020 projects, i.e. listed in the "participants" of Horizon 2020 projects;
4. Chinese and European participants should conduct equal and mutually beneficial collaboration that complements their advantages. Inputs and division of tasks among project participants should be basically balanced;
5. Chinese applicants should submit a copy of their Horizon 2020 project proposal in English and the Chinese translation of project budget and the research content by the Chinese participants, and should ensure that the Horizon 2020 project overall budget includes the budget of Chinese participants, the budget included in the proposals submitted to MOST by the Chinese participants shall not exceed that included in the Horizon 2020 project, and the research content should include the part by the Chinese participants in the English proposals;
6. Project durations should in principal not exceed three years;
7. The overall arrangement of EU-China STI Co-funding Mechanism (CFM) can be accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_localsupp_china_en.pdf;

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The frequently asked questions on CFM:

https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/questions_answers_on_eu-china_co-funding_mechanism_for_research_and_innovation_cooperation_0.pdf

EU contact: Delegation-China-Scitech@eeas.europa.eu

China-EU STI cooperation in other areas

Cooperation agreement: Administrative Arrangement between the Directorate General for Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Science and Technology of China on a Co-funding Mechanism for the period 2018-2020 to support Collaborative Research and Innovation Projects under Joint Flagship Initiatives and other areas

Areas:

1. New generation information network
5G communication technology, optical communication technology, CPU, Internet-of-things, virtual reality technology, quantum computing, big data
2. Intelligent and green manufacturing
High-end numerical control machine tools and intelligent robot, electric power equipment, next generation semiconductor, additive manufacturing, new energy equipment, micro-nano manufacturing, gas turbine
3. Safe, clean and efficient energy
Clean coal utilisation, marine wind power, smart grid, hydrogen fuel cell technology, nuclear energy utilisation and nuclear decommissioning technology
4. Advanced, effective, safe and convenient health technologies
Bio-pharmaceuticals, precision medicine, high performance medical devices, prevention and treatment of major infectious diseases, antibiotic resistance, regenerative medicine, medical big data, medical robots, aging services technology, traditional Chinese medicines
5. Marine equipment
Marine engineering equipment and high-tech ships, deep-sea oil and gas, natural gas hydrate, deep-sea operation
6. Space
Space equipment, space science and technology, satellite application technology (small satellite and load technology), remote sensing (deep-space exploration, satellite imaging, atmospheric observation, lunar-based observation)
7. New materials
Graphene technology, nanomaterials, high performance structure and composite materials, advanced semiconductor materials, advanced light alloy materials, advanced functional and intelligent materials, catalytic materials
8. Large scientific research facilities
9. Public security:
Disaster warning and treatment, food and pharmaceutical safety testing

Number of projects to be funded: 30

Fund to be allocated: 90 million RMB

Other requirements

1. EU-China Co-Funding Mechanism for STI cooperation aims to support Chinese participation in Horizon 2020 in the priority areas;
2. Applicants should have submitted joint applications with their European partners under the EU's Horizon 2020 Work Programmes 2018, 2019 and 2020. Projects under other annual Work Programmes are not covered by this call for proposals;
3. Each individual Horizon 2020 project should correspond to an individual Chinese project application. Several Chinese participants in the same Horizon 2020 project should designate one lead applicant through consultations to submit one Chinese proposal. Chinese applicants should be full partners in Horizon 2020 projects, i.e. listed in the Horizon 2020 project "participants";
4. Chinese and European participants should conduct mutually beneficial scientific research and innovation collaboration that complements their advantages;
5. Chinese applicants should submit a copy of their Horizon 2020 project proposal in English and the Chinese translation of project budget and the research content by the Chinese participants, and should ensure that the Horizon 2020 project overall budget includes the budget of Chinese participants, the budget included in the proposals submitted to MOST by the Chinese participants shall not exceed that included in the Horizon 2020 project, and the research content should include the part by the Chinese participants in the English proposals;
6. The project implementation period should in principal not exceed three years;
7. Please refer to Work Programmes 2018-2020 in specific areas for detailed EU project arrangement: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-work-programme>;

The overall arrangement of the EU-China co-funding mechanism for research and innovation: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_localsupp_china_en.pdf;

The Frequently Asked Questions in relation to the EU-China co-funding mechanism for research and innovation: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/questions_answers_on_eu-china_co-funding_mechanism_for_research_and_innovation_cooperation_0.pdf

EU contact: Delegation-China-Scitech@eeas.europa.eu

Administrative Check Requirements³

Project proposals should meet the following administrative check requirements.

1. Recommendation procedures and application forms
 - 1) Recommendation letters should be issued by the recommending entities defined in the guidelines in due time as indicated.
 - 2) The proposal should be recommended by one recommending entity and should not be submitted through multiple or duplicate channels.
 - 3) The content in project proposals (including pre-applications and full proposals, same for the following) should be in line with the areas provided in the guidelines.
 - 4) Project proposals and annexes should be filled up in complete by following the template provided.
2. Eligibility conditions of applicants
 - 1) Principal investigators should be born after 1 January 1960 and should hold senior professional titles or PhD degrees.
 - 2) Scientists of foreign nationalities recruited by Chinese mainland entities and scientists from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan can be Principal Investigators. Employees under full recruitment conditions should provide valid full recruitment documentations issued by Chinese mainland employers, while employees under part-time recruitment conditions should provide valid recruitment documentations issued by both employers, which should be submitted in project pre-applications.
 - 3) Principal Investigators can only submit for one project. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) under the National Major S&T Projects, National Key R&D Programmes and STI 2030 Major Projects cannot lead project applications. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (excluding leaders of tasks or topics) under the National Key R&D Programmes and STI 2030 Major Projects cannot participate in project applications either. Principal Investigator and key project members can lead or participate in one project only under this Programme.
 - 4) Members of Advisory Committee cannot apply for projects. Experts that participated in the formulation of Special Programme implementation plans or application guidelines of the current year cannot apply for projects under the Programme.
 - 5) Good integrity status, no records of severe research dishonesty under punishment nor relevant social credit "black list" records.

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- 6) Public service staff (including those undertaking S&T programme administration functions) in central and local government agencies cannot apply for projects.
3. Eligibility conditions of application entities
 - 1) Legal person entities such as research institutes, universities and enterprises registered in Chinese mainland. Government agencies cannot lead or participate in applications.
 - 2) The time of registration should be prior to 31 March 2019.
 - 3) Good integrity status, no records of severe research dishonesty under punishment nor relevant social credit "black list" records.
 4. Please refer to other specific requirements on other administrative check details defined in this Programme for the specific countries (regions, international organisations).

Persons in charge of administrative checks: Lin Xiyan, Xin Bingqing