

**Japan – Singapore Joint Call for Proposals:
Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and
Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)
2024**

Summary:

Call announcement:	1:00 PM (JST), noon (SGT) on 6 th August 2024
Deadline for submission:	1:00 PM (JST), noon (SGT) on 30 th September 2024
Selection results announcement:	End-January 2025
Start of projects:	April 2025
Funding per project:	(Japan-side: per project) Direct Expenses: Up to 30 million yen Indirect Expenses: 30% of Direct Expenses (added in addition to the Direct Expenses) (Singapore-side: per project) Total Expenses: Up to 350,000 Singapore dollars, inclusive of 30% indirect expenses
Maximum duration of each project:	36 months
Total number of projects to be awarded:	Up to ten
Eligibility:	Japan side: Any independent researcher personally affiliated with (and actively conducting research at) a 'Domestic Japanese research institution,' regardless of nationality. Singapore side: Singapore-based PIs are eligible to apply if their primary appointment is 75% or more in a local publicly funded research institution.
Submission:	To JST via e-Rad: https://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html To A*STAR via iGrants: igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg
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1. Introduction

Japan and Singapore have a strong and longstanding partnership in bilateral research collaborations. This new joint grant call by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research of Singapore (A*STAR) aims to promote and strengthen bilateral collaborations and exchanges between researchers from Japan and Singapore in joint research projects of mutual interest.

On the Japan side, this funding measure is carried out under the international collaboration program which aims to build a “Complementary and Sustainable Research Ecosystem”, facilitating mutual growth as co-creating partners by enhancing sustainable research cooperation grounded in longstanding initiatives such as international collaborative research and the exchange of research personnel.

For Singapore, this funding measure is carried out under the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2025 (RIE2025) plan. Teams from Singapore are encouraged to include collaborators from other ASEAN Member States. Possible collaborators from institutions in other ASEAN countries should seek their own funding or provide in-kind contributions.

2. Research Fields for the collaboration program Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Cutting-Edge AI Technologies Aimed at Societal Transformation

Subtopics:

- AI for Smart Cities (incl. development of AI modeling and IoT technology to optimize urban infrastructure and services)
- AI for Sustainability (incl. development of AI algorithms to optimize energy usage, resource allocation, and environmental monitoring)
- AI for Trust and Safety (incl. development of AI-powered systems to design robust cybersecurity and safeguard user privacy)
- AI for Linguistic Diversity (incl. development of large-scale language models to accommodate diverse languages and promote cultural preservation and linguistic inclusivity)

*Proposed research is recommended to follow the subtopics above, but the themes are not limited to them hence the team is open to explore other subtopics related to the research field on Artificial Intelligence - Cutting-Edge AI Technologies Aimed at Societal Transformation.

3. Researcher Eligibility

Two identical copies of a proposal must be submitted to both the JST and the A*STAR. Detailed information on project proposal and submission guidelines can be found in the sections below.

Please note that proposals received by the A*STAR and not submitted to JST (and vice versa) will automatically be considered ineligible.

When submitting your application through both the JST and the A*STAR online submission systems, you will also need to enter some details online. Therefore, applicants are advised to start submitting their applications at least one week before the deadline of this Joint Call for

Proposals. Applications that are submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

3.1 Eligible Researchers for JST Support:

- Any independent researcher personally affiliated with (and actively conducting research at) a 'Domestic Japanese research institution,' regardless of nationality, is eligible to apply.
- 'Domestic Japanese research institution' refers to universities, independent administrative institutions, national/public testing and Research Institutions, specially authorized corporations, public-service corporations, and enterprises, etc. that satisfy requirements predetermined by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Please refer to the MEXT homepage for more information:
https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kansa/houkoku/1324571.htm
- The Japanese applicants must also complete a research ethics training program conducted by the research institute with which the Principal Investigator (PI) is affiliated, and then declare the completion of the program to JST. If it is very difficult for the Japanese PI to undertake a program provided by his or her affiliated institute, they should contact JST. Please note that unless applicants complete a research ethics program, his / her application will be deemed ineligible. For more details, please refer to the call announcement page linked from the JST homepage.
- Japanese applicants will have to register their applications on the Cross-Ministerial R&D Management System (e-Rad: <https://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html>).

3.2 Eligible Researchers for A*STAR Support:

- Singapore-based PIs are eligible to apply if their primary appointment is 75% or more in a local publicly funded research institution.
- Applications must be endorsed by the applicants' Host Institution/s, prior to submission.
- Applicants must deliver their project in accordance to the A*STAR Grants Terms & Conditions and Guidelines.

4. Characteristics of Proposals under this Call

4.1 Proposal for JST

A joint proposal must be written in English and must comply with instructions in the Joint Application Form. Identical copies of the proposal must be submitted to A*STAR and JST respectively. In addition, Japan-based PIs must also submit the Japanese application form (appendix for Japan-side PIs) in Japanese.

4.2 Proposal for A*STAR

Proposals have to provide all the information requested, including all necessary attachments and endorsement by the relevant Host Institutions, more details can be found in the application form.

5. Amount of Funding

5.1. Amount of Funding by JST:

- JST will support each Japan-based team up to 30 million Japanese Yen as direct expenses for 36 months.
- In addition to direct expenses, the overhead cost of 30% of Direct expenses will be added as indirect expenses separately.
- The budget for a project may differ each year, depending on the content of activities.
- The amounts will be adjusted each year due to the budgetary limitations for this program.

5.2. Amount of Funding by A*STAR:

A*STAR will support up to SGD\$350,000 per project, inclusive of indirect costs. Indirect costs are capped at 30% for Singapore Public Sector Research Performers.

Participants are to allocate a portion of their total direct expenses to exchange activities of researchers who can play an important role in the joint research and who are expected to be internationally active in the future, e.g., by promoting their international mobility and circulation, such as dispatching them to the partner country or holding workshops, or by providing international research opportunities such as presenting at international conference.

6. Eligible Costs

6.1. Eligible Costs for Japan-based Applicants:

(1) Direct expenses

Direct expenses are expenses directly used for research purposes at the awarded research institution, and can be used for the following:

- Equipment costs (equipment and consumables)
- Travel costs
 - In principle, travel costs are incurred in accordance with the guidelines of the awarded research institution. Travel expenses are applicable to travel directly related to the execution of the research, dissemination activities, etc.
- Personnel costs (PI and Co-PI personnel costs and buyout policy may apply)
- Miscellaneous
- In addition to the above, research expenses may include, for example:
 - Expenses for organizing and hosting events for research result dissemination
 - Outsourcing costs (excluding subcontracting)
 - Equipment leasing costs, transportation costs, for equipment used for the research project
 - personnel expenses for administrative staff that coordinate the travel of outgoing

researchers and their personnel-related procedures can be recorded as direct expenses.

(Points of Caution)

Participants are to allocate around 30% of the total direct expenses to exchange activities of researchers including graduate and undergraduate students who can play an important role in the joint research and who are expected to be internationally active in the future, *e.g., by promoting their international mobility and circulation, such as dispatching them to the partner country or holding workshops, or by providing international research opportunities such as presenting at international conference.*

(2) Indirect expenses

- Indirect expenses go directly to the awarded research institution for the purposes of administrative purposes and must constitute 30% of the direct cost.

6.2. Eligible Costs for Singapore-based Applicants

Please refer to the section on Disbursement of funds of the A*STAR Grants Guidelines for fundable items.

A list of non-fundable direct cost items is provided in the table below.

Type of Expenses	Description
Salaries of Lead PI / Investigators / Visiting Professors & researchers/ Collaborators/ general administrative support staff	Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by Grantor.
Teaching buy outs	Not allowable for the hiring of substitutes to perform the Investigators' teaching duties.
Stipend top-up for existing post-graduate scholarship holders	Not allowable.
Undergraduate stipend and tuition support	Not allowable.
Costs related to general administration and management.	Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by Grantor. This includes common office equipment, such as furniture and fittings, office software, photocopiers, scanners and office supplies.
Costs of office or laboratory space	Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by Grantor. This includes renovation/outfitting costs, rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditures such as water, electricity, waste disposal and building/facilities maintenance charges.

Personal productivity tools & communication expenses	Not allowable, unless the use of mobile phones and other form of smart devices were indicated in the methodology for the Research.
Audit fees (Internal and external audit) and Legal fees	Not allowable.
Entertainment	No allowable.
Refreshment	Not allowable, unless this is related to a hosted conference or workshop, specifically approved by the Grantor for the Research.
Fines and Penalties	Not allowable.
Patent Application	Not allowable. This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost.
Professional Membership Fees	Not allowable.
Staff retreat and team-building activities.	Not allowable.

This list is not exhaustive and applies only to the expenditure of the grant funds. Other costs may be ineligible where we decide that they do not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes for the project or that they are contrary to the objective of the program.

You must ensure you have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.

7. Submission

The Principal Investigator from Japan must submit the collaborative proposal to JST and the Principal Investigator from Singapore must submit the joint proposal to A*STAR. **Identical copies of the proposal must be submitted to JST and A*STAR, respectively.**

7.1. Submission Procedure for JST:

Application documents by the Japan-based researcher should be submitted through the online e-Rad platform (<https://www.e-rad.go.jp/>).

7.2. Submission Procedure for A*STAR:

Applicants from the Singapore-based researcher must submit the joint proposal to A*STAR through the iGrants platform (igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg).

8. Timeline

- **Call announcement:** 6th August 2024 at 1:00 PM (JST) / noon (SGT)
- **Deadline of submission** 30th September 2024 at 1:00 PM (JST) / noon (SGT)

- **Selection results announcement:** End-January 2025
- **Expected start of granted projects:** April 2025

9. Assessment and Selection

9.1. Evaluation Procedure

Independent Committees consisting of experts selected by JST and A*STAR respectively will evaluate all proposals. Based on the results of the evaluation, JST and A*STAR will make a common decision regarding funding of selected proposals.

9.2 Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

The following general evaluation criteria will apply to each proposed proposal:

- Capability of PIs
 - Research leaders should be able to lead and take responsibility for the entire team strongly. A sufficient collaborative system should be planned that can contribute greatly to the achievement of the research objectives as leaders.
- Expected scientific results
 - The expected achievements from the proposed research shall be eminent, creative and at an internationally recognized standard.
- Expected economic and social impact
 - The expected outcomes from the proposed research should attempt to produce a significant impact on the development of future science and technology or to create innovative technological seeds that can contribute to the creation of new industries in the future.
- Synergy effects of international collaboration
 - The expected achievements from the proposed research should be produced through essential collaborative research rather than a combination of individual research projects.
 - The exchange plan is clearly planned, and organic ties are expected to be fostered.
- Consistency with the research field of this grant call and feasibility of implementation (given proposed plan, participants, budget, facilities, means of cooperation, etc.)
 - The proposed methodology should be feasible, with well-defined research and exchange milestones from both sides and KPIs (from the Singapore side).
 - Research objectives must be matched to the research field of this grant call. Plans, and deliverables must be clearly described, and technical challenges must be properly addressed.
 - Teams highlight the novelty of their approaches or methodology based on providing the clues necessary to demonstrate the feasibility of the research concept.

10. Contract between Researchers in Japan and Singapore

It is required that a Research Collaboration Agreement (RCA) be signed for any joint research collaboration among institutions with which collaborating researchers are affiliated. The contract for cooperative research shall include conclusions of discussions among the institutions which are entitled to intellectual property arising as a result of research collaboration, and the institutions concerned on issues regarding treatment of research information brought by researchers involved for the implementation of research collaboration, of research achievements as a result of research collaboration and of intellectual properties among the concerned institutions. Reference to this joint guideline (“10. Contract between Researchers in Japan and Singapore”) should be made within the contract drawn up by the institutions in Japan and Singapore.

10.1 the Japan-based PIs

Before the conclusion of the contract, the Japan-based principal investigator must submit the checklist in specified form to JST and then undergo a check by JST. When concluded, JST needs to be promptly notified of the contract. If there is any difficulty concluding the contract, please consult JST in advance.

10.2 the Singapore-based PIs

The RCA should be submitted to A*STAR by the respective researchers within three months starting from the date in the Letter of Award. Permission from A*STAR must be sought at least one month in advance if further time extension is required for the completion of the RCA. A*STAR reserve the right to terminate further fund disbursements if this condition is not met.

The awarded projects will be subjected to the Terms and Conditions set by A*STAR. Management of the projects will be in accordance with the A*STAR Guidelines for Managing A*STAR Grants. Arrangements relating to intellectual property rights (including copyright and patent rights) and commercialisation of such intellectual property shall be in accordance to the A*STAR Grants Terms & Conditions Clause 14.

11. Reporting

11.1 the Japan-based PIs

Japan-based PIs shall submit to JST annual research plans for the year ahead and reports on the progress in the past year, and the institution with which the PI is affiliated shall submit an annual financial report. Any key changes to the project team or activities, particularly if they affect the ability to complete the project should be made known to JST immediately.

At the end of the period of support and after completion of the joint research activities, the Japan-based PI shall promptly submit to JST a final report which shall include a financial report and a description of the research activities and outcomes. The report shall include a general summary of the activities of both the Japanese and the Singapore research teams. If papers describing results of the research activities are presented to academic journals, societies etc., a list of those papers and other related information should be attached to the final report. Detailed instructions for preparation of the final report will be provided to the Japan-based PI

during the final year of the project. Completed projects will be duly evaluated and excellent outcomes may be made public.

11.2 the Singapore-based PIs

Any key changes to the project team or activities, particularly if they affect the ability to complete the project should be made known to A*STAR immediately. The Institutions shall submit the reports and statements set out in Clause 10 of the A*STAR Grants Terms & Conditions (T&Cs), in accordance with the format required by A*STAR. Notwithstanding Clauses 10.2 to 10.8 of the A*STAR Grants T&Cs, A*STAR may vary the reporting requirements of the Institutions in the Letter of Award. This includes but is not limited to requiring the Institutions to provide reports and statements within different deadlines or at more regular intervals. The provisions of Clause 10 of the A*STAR Grants T&Cs shall apply (together with any necessary adjustments) to such reporting requirements.

Time is of the essence with respect to the obligations set out in Clause 10 of the A*STAR Grants T&Cs. In the event that an Institution fails to fulfil any requirement set out in the Clause 10 of the A*STAR Grants T&Cs within the stipulated timeline or to demonstrate satisfactory progress in the Research, A*STAR may discontinue further disbursements of the Funding.

12. Contact information

Japan-based applicants: inquiries to JST regarding this Call for Proposals should be sent to joint-call-ja@jst.go.jp

Singapore-based applicants: inquiries to A*STAR regarding this Call for Proposals should be sent to oga_bilats@hq.a-star.edu.sg