

# AJ-CORE (Africa-Japan Collaborative Research)

## Frequently Asked Questions

as of July 10, 2025

### I Filling out the Application Form

**1. Is it necessary to include researchers from the humanities and social sciences in the consortium?**

It is not mandatory, but it is recommended to include researchers from the humanities and social sciences to ensure that the research content considers social implementation aspects.

**2. Can you introduce research institutions or researchers from each country?**

From a fairness perspective, individual introductions to research institutions or researchers are not provided. As a reference, however, two databases of researchers in Japan are shown below. For countries other than Japan, please contact the respective country's funding agency.

researchmap: <https://researchmap.jp/researchers?lang=en>

KAKEN: <https://kaken.nii.ac.jp/en/>

**3. Do Associated Partners need to be from institutions located in South Africa?**

The participation of Associated Partners is not mandatory. If they do participate, it is not necessary for them to belong to African institutions.

**4. From eligibility viewpoint, is a consortium consisting of three countries from Japan, South Africa and an SGCI member country other than Botswana, Ethiopia, and Kenya acceptable to apply?**

Yes, it is. While Botswana, Ethiopia, and Kenya are different in that their funding agencies are committed to providing research fund, a consortium with other SGCI member countries is also eligible. Please clearly state the benefits of their participation, the research content they will handle, and their mode of participation (in kind/otherwise) in the application form.

Please refer to Section 1.3 “Countries participating in the AJ-CORE” in the call for proposals framework:

For a consortium to be eligible it should consist of researchers from at least:

- one South African institution,
- one Japanese institution and
- one institution in an SGCI African country

**5. Can researchers from countries other than SGCI members apply?**

Proposals require at least three countries: South Africa, Japan, and an SGCI member country. Non-SGCI member countries can participate as Associated Partners.

**6. Is it possible to apply as a two-country consortium of just either Japan or South Africa, and another country?**

Proposals require at least three countries: South Africa, Japan, and an SGCI member country. Applications with only two countries are not eligible.

**7. I was selected for funding in a previous round of AJ-CORE call for proposals. Can I apply for this call?**

If you are applying as a PI (Principal Investigator) from Japan, funding period overlap is not allowed. Therefore, a PI currently receiving AJ-CORE research fund which support period will overlap with that of the fifth call cannot apply. If the support period has already ended or will have ended when the fifth call support period starts, you can apply.

For a PI of a country other than Japan, please consult with the respective country's funding agency.

**8. Can I apply with multiple proposals for this call for proposals?**

For this call for proposals, you cannot apply through e-Rad with multiple proposals as a PI from Japan. An error will occur during registration.

For applying with multiple proposals as a PI from a country other than Japan, please consult with the respective country's funding agency.

**9. The Call for Proposals Framework shows that “Total number of projects to be funded” of Botswana is three. Does it mean that three projects involving researchers from Botswana will be selected?**

It means that the research fund budgeted by Botswana's funding agency for this call is as much as to support up to three projects involving researchers from Botswana. It does not guarantee the adoption of three projects with Botswanan researchers. Same applies to Ethiopia and Kenya.

**10. Is there a limit on the number of Co-PIs?**

There is no limit on the number of Co-PIs for the Japanese team, but please consider the balance with the available budget.

For limitations on the number of Co-PIs in the team of a country other than Japan, please consult the respective country's funding agency.

**11. How are the travel expenses for the kick-off, mid-term, and final workshops financed?**

As in the Call for Proposals Framework, travel expenses related to workshop participation need to be covered by the research budget. Please take this into account when planning the budget.

**12. Do all members of the consortium need to participate in the workshops?**

It depends on the composition of the consortium, but please consider having at least one participant from each country.

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**13. I am considering a consortium with an SGCI member country other than Botswana, Ethiopia and Kenya. How should I fill out the Joint proposal form?**

For a research proposal to meet the eligibility requirement of three or more countries, participation from Japan, South Africa, and a third African country is necessary. While there are differences in terms of research fund availability from the funding agencies, any SGCI member country can be accepted as the third African partner country.

An example of standard submission for a country other than Botswana, Ethiopia, and Kenya as the third African country is as follows.

| # | Joint proposal form                            | Items                                    |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Part. 1 General information 6. Budget overview | Country, Name, Fund                      |
| 2 | Part. 2 Project team members                   | Country, Name, Organization, Title, etc. |
| 3 | Part. 5 Budgets plan                           | Country, Budget                          |
| 4 | Part. 6 CVs                                    | Country, CV for PI(s)                    |
| 5 | Annex.1 (Letter of Intent)                     | Country, Name                            |
| 6 | Annex.2 (Institutional Endorsement Letter)     | Country, Name, Organization, Title, etc. |

Please also refer to Annex III, Structure of the proposal (details), in the Call for Proposals Framework (pdf) regarding the documents to be submitted at the time of proposal entry.

**14. Which statement regarding research expenses is regarded as master? How should the total amount be considered?**

The statement is the table in “Part 5: Budget plan of the Joint proposal form” is regarded as master. Based on the amount specified in Part 5: Budget plan, please fill out Part 1: 6. Budget overview.

The total research budget is maximum 18.2 million Japanese Yen for three years. This includes indirect costs which is 30% of the direct costs. Annual breakdown is your choice.

**15. Are there examples for Section 3.8 "Science Engagement" in Part 3: Project description of the Joint proposal form?**

It refers to activities that disseminate the research results to the society and contribute to enhancing public understanding of science. Examples include newspaper articles, radio interviews, television interviews, short films, pamphlets (for the broader public), school engagements, and social media blogs. Please also refer to Section 2.5: Knowledge sharing and research uptake activities in the Call for Proposals Framework (pdf).

**16. How should Joint proposal form Annex 1 (Letter of Intent) be prepared?**

Please submit a PDF signed by the PI of each country team participating in the consortium. As long as all signatures can be verified, you can create one document for the consortium or create one for each country, resulting in multiple documents.

**17. Is the Finance clause in Annex 2 (Institutional Endorsement Letter) of the Joint proposal form irrelevant if participating as “in kind”?**

If participating as “in kind”, it is acceptable to delete the Finance clause. Please modify it appropriately according to the consortium's composition.

**18. What should be included in Part 4: Impact Pathway of the Joint proposal form?**

Please describe how the research conducted by the consortium will impact the society.

"Research output" refers to the research results directly obtained from the consortium's research.

"Outcome" denotes the changes (such as improved convenience) experienced by users who utilize or benefit from some of these results outside the consortium.

"Impact" signifies the economic, social, or environmental transformation that the project ultimately aims to achieve through these outcomes.

"Indicators" show the metrics set (not necessarily numerical) regarding "output" or "outcome".

For more information about research outputs, indicators, and impact related to the Impact Pathway, refer to section 2.4 Impact plan approach in the AJ-CORE Call for Proposals Framework (pdf).

**19. Are there examples for filling out Part 4: Impact Pathway of the Joint proposal form?**

Please contact JST via email at [jointza@jst.go.jp](mailto:jointza@jst.go.jp) for assistance.

**20. The Japanese application form specifies a word count guideline. Is it acceptable to exceed this word count guideline?**

The word count is a guideline, so a slight excess is acceptable.

**21. The Japanese application form's "Principal Investigator Checklist" includes a section on intellectual property handling. Are any documents or preparations required at the application stage?**

At the application stage, simple description of how you plan to address the checklist items is enough.

International collaborative research agreement is to be concluded after selection, so there is no need to submit these documents at the application stage.

**22. Should the Japanese application form be filled out in Japanese?**

It can also be completed in English.

**23. Who is the institutional head for stamping on the Japanese application form's "Confirmation by the Institutional Head"?**

The institutional head refers to the top of the institution, such as the president for a university, not the dean or department head.

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## **II Submitting the Application Form**

### **24. What are the submissions required from Japanese team researchers?**

Two items are required: the "Joint proposal form" and the "Japanese Application Form."

The "Joint proposal form" should be created as a single form for the consortium, including the annex. The completed "Joint proposal form" must be submitted by the South African PI to NRF and by the Japanese PI through e-Rad to JST. Please ensure that the identical information is submitted.

The "Japanese Application Form" needs to be submitted only by the Japanese PI as an accompanying document to the "Joint proposal form."

Please also refer to Annex III (Structure of the proposal (details)) in the Call for Proposals Framework (pdf)

### **25. Is approval from the affiliated institution required when submitting the application?**

For Japanese PI, approval from the affiliated institution is not required when submitting the application through e-Rad. Researchers can directly submit to JST.

However, for South African side, please note that approval from the affiliated institution is required when submitting to NRF.

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### III Entering e-Rad

#### 26. About entering research expenses

The table in Part 5: Budget plan of the Joint proposal form is the master. Please enter the research expenses in e-Rad according to the following correspondence table.

| Part.5 Budgets plan |                            | e-Rad: 研究経費 タブ |        |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------|
|                     | Type of costs              |                |        |
| Direct Expense      | Research Materials         | 直接経費           | 物品費    |
|                     | Equipment                  |                |        |
|                     | Travel and Living expenses |                | 旅費     |
|                     | Personnel cost             |                | 人件費・謝金 |
|                     | Others                     |                | その他    |
| Overhead Expenses   |                            | 間接経費           |        |

#### 27. About entering research organization information

Please enter the PI listed in Part 2: Project team members/Japan of the Joint proposal form, as well as Co-PIs who meet the following conditions:

If a researcher listed as "Co-PI" in Part 2: Project team members/Japan meets the following two conditions:

- Belongs to a research institution different from the Principal Investigator's.
- Plans to conclude a commissioned research contract with JST and receive research funds to perform the study.

\*Note: "Co-PIs entered in e-Rad" and "(2) 日本側研究分担者 in Japanese Application Form 2-1" are the same. Please list the same researchers.

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