

Japan-Spain Joint Funding “Nanomedicine Call for Collaborative Research Proposals Driven by Early Stage Researchers”

Launching of the call: 28th of March 2018

Submission deadline: 12th of June 2018

I. General Description

Joint Funding of Japan-Spain Collaborative Research

Based on the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) dated April 5th, 2017, Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (hereinafter referred to as “AMED”) and the Spanish State Secretariat for Research and Development (hereinafter referred to as “SEIDI”) have expressed the desire to strengthen R&D cooperation between scientists in Japan and Spain in the field of Health research and development. The AMED-AEI (State Research Agency) joint call is therefore launched to take the AMED-SEIDI engagement to a deeper level. For this call, “**Nanomedicine**” was selected as the specific research area.

Aim of This Call and Research topics

The aims of this call are to:

- 1) Strengthen research collaborations between Japan and Spain within the field of Nanomedicine;
- 2) Achieve world-class scientific results through the development and use of new and innovative technologies which can address the challenges facing the international community in the area of health research in both countries.

Collaborative Research Proposals will address multidisciplinary and translational research. Interdisciplinary teams’ composition and consortia are encouraged. Project proposals must cover at least one of the following areas that are equal in relevance for this call:

- a) Diagnosis
- b) New treatments, compounds and targeted delivery systems

Proposals may include, but are not limited to: identification, characterization and validation of biomarkers, early diagnosis, convergence of nanotechnology and stem cell technology, cell biology applied to nanomedicine, multimodal imaging agents or techniques, point of care diagnostics (on site sensors), standardized procedures for preparation & characterization of drug delivery systems, gene therapy using nanotechnology and development and use of nanomaterials for medical purposes. Pre-clinical and early clinical studies are eligible.

Proposals excluded from this call: clinical trials.

This is operated under the Strategic International Collaborative Research Program (SICORP) between AMED and AEI-MINECO (Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness). To accomplish the R&D objectives mutually agreed upon by both countries, AMED will assign the Program Supervisor

(PS) and Program Officer (PO), who play a key role in the management of evaluation process and the management of projects on the Japanese side.

Prospective Applicants:

AMED and AEI-MINECO invite **early stage researchers** based in Japan and Spain to submit collaborative research proposals for this call pertaining to the area of Nanomedicine. This call for collaborative proposals will require a set of applicants (co-applicants) who will be serving as co-Principal Investigators (PI) based in Japan and Spain to work in partnership on research projects. Japan-based applicants will be funded by AMED, while Spanish-based applicants will be funded by AEI-MINECO.

Eligibility to apply will be determined by the following eligibility rules.

Eligibility for both Japan based and Spain based early stage researcher:

- a) Must have been awarded their first PhD or equivalent doctoral degree, **at least 2 and up to 15 years' prior the proposal submission deadline.**
- b) Extensions to this period may be allowed in case of eligible career breaks, which must be properly documented.

Eligible career breaks are:

- For maternity: the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by 18 months for each child born before or after the PhD award
- For paternity: the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by the actual amount of paternity leave taken for each child born before or after the PhD award
- For long term illness (over ninety days), clinical qualification or national service the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by the documented amount of leave taken for each event which occurred after the PhD award

Not allowed: Principal Investigators are not allowed to apply for funding in more than one proposal of this Japan-Spain call.

Eligibility for Japan-based co-applicants:

- a. The Japan-based co-applicants must be the persons who will be the co-PIs for the project.
- b. The Japan-based co-applicants must be affiliated with a domestic Japanese Universities etc. * research institution and they will carry out the proposed project at this institution.

The following researchers may also submit applications:

- Researchers of foreign nationality who are affiliated with a domestic Japanese University etc. research institution.

- Researchers who are not currently affiliated with a research institution or affiliated with an overseas research institution, but would be able to become affiliated with a domestic Japanese University etc., and organize a system for carrying out the R&D project if selected as an R&D PI.

c. Researchers who are able to bear overall responsibility for an R&D project throughout the entire project period.

- For further details, please refer to “V. Responsibilities of Research Leaders after Proposals are Approved.”

*: The term “University etc.” refers to educational corporations such as national, public and private university corporations; public research organizations such as national and public testing and research bodies, independent administrative agencies, and national R&D corporations; and public organizations such as benevolent corporations.

Eligibility for Spain-based co-applicants:

a. The Spain-based co-applicants must be the persons who will be the co-PIs for the project. Spanish Principal Investigators must be eligible according to the *Acciones de Programación Conjunta Internacional* (APCIN) call (or equivalent) and must have experience as investigators or team members in projects funded by the Plan Nacional I+D+i 2008-2011, the Plan Estatal I+D+i 2013-2016, ERC Grants, European Framework Programmes or other relevant international or regional programmes.

b. Eligible entities: non-profit research organizations according to the APCIN call or equivalent.

c. The maximum funding per project by the Spanish side will be 150.000 euros, independently of the number of Spanish groups per proposal. The consortium should be as balanced as possible.

Incompatibilities

- Principal Investigators have to remain unchanged between the proposal submission and the National APCIN call or equivalent.

- Principal Investigators are not allowed to apply for funding in more than one proposal in the same APCIN call or equivalent or in two consecutive APCIN calls. This must be taken into account when participating in different international calls funded through APCIN calls.

The AEI-MINECO will avoid double funding (overlapping with other EU or National funding), and will not grant projects or parts of projects already funded.

II. Financial support

In this collaborative call, AMED and AEI-MINECO will fund **up to three collaborative research proposals**, each at a total budget of no more than 21 million yen per project for entire project duration including indirect cost from AMED (approx.7 million yen/year/project) and no more than 150.000 € from AEI-MINECO per project for the entire project duration. Therefore, the total funding commitment is 63 million yen from AMED and 450.000 € from AEI-MINECO.

AMED will provide support for the researchers based in Japan, and AEI-MINECO will support researchers based in Spain.

The duration of a collaborative research project shall be no longer than three years [thirty-six (36) months] in total from the start date.

a) Support by AMED

Budget for Collaborative Research Projects: the total budget for each project proposed by Japan-based co-applicants over a full three (3)-year period (i.e. thirty-six (36) months) should not exceed twenty one (21) million yen in principle including indirect cost. The planned budget for research projects may vary each fiscal year, depending on the planned activities specific to each project. Funding for Japan-based Teams are allowable for:

	Main item	Definition
Direct costs	Costs of goods (equipment/supplies)	Research facilities/equipment/prototypes, software (ready-made goods), book purchasing costs, purchasing costs for reagents/materials/consumables for use in research
	Travel costs	Travel costs of R&D participants, travel costs for invited participants such as external experts
	Personnel costs/services costs	Personnel costs: personnel costs for researchers, etc., employed to conduct the relevant contracted R&D Service costs: expenditure for services such as lecture requests, guidance/advice, test subjects, interpreters/translators, and unskilled labor.
	Other	Costs for implementing the relevant contracted R&D other than the above. Examples: R&D results publication costs (academic paper contribution costs, academic paper offprint costs, website production costs, etc.), conference costs, equipment leasing costs, Equipment repair costs, printing costs, subcontract costs, testing costs, amount equivalent to consumption tax related to untaxed transactions, etc.
Indirect costs ²	Expenditure used by research institutes and paid by AMED as necessary costs for managing the research institutes during implementation of the relevant R&D, paid at a fixed percentage of direct costs (within 30%) as an allowance.	

¹Link from: <https://www.amed.go.jp/keiri/index.html>

² Implemented when AMED concludes a contracted R&D agreement with a national university corporation, inter-university research institute corporation, independent administrative corporation, special corporation, special private corporation, general incorporated association, general incorporated foundation, public interest incorporated association, public interest incorporated foundation or private university, etc., and does not apply in the case that the researcher is affiliated with a national facility or other institution (excluding the National Institute for Educational Policy Research). The fixed percentage will not exceed 30%. With regard to Subsidiary Institutions (excluding national facilities or other institutions) also, indirect costs are allocated in accordance with direct costs.

Contract between Japan-based Co-PI and AMED

Support will be implemented in accordance with a contract for commissioned research which shall be entered into between AMED and the Japan-based co-PI's Institution. The contract for commissioned research will be signed each fiscal year over the collaborative research period. Since the contract is agreed on condition that all administrative procedures related to the project in question shall be handled within the institution, the PI should consult with the department in charge at his/her institution.

b) Support by AEI-MINECO

The total budget for each project proposed by Spanish-based co-applicants over a full three (3)-year period (i.e. thirty-six (36) months) should not exceed 150.000 €.

Direct cost	Personnel costs for temporary employment contracts (scholarships are not eligible). - Current costs, small scientific equipment, disposable materials, travelling expenses and other costs that can be justified as necessary to carry out the proposed activities.
Indirect cost	Indirect costs (overheads) or clinical trials (proofs of concept, proofs of principle) are not eligible for funding in the APCIN call.

The Spanish research team could include additional groups, other than the co-PI group, from different institutions. However, the maximum amount of funding is 150,000 € per proposal (the whole Spanish part). The maximum number of Spanish groups asking for funding per proposal is two.

The final funding will take into account the international evaluation of the collaborative proposal, the scientific quality of the Spanish group, the added value of the international collaboration and the financial resources available.

Contract between Spanish Co-PI and AEI-MINECO

The awarded projects will be subjected to the Terms and Conditions set by the Spanish Call on International Joint Programming Actions 2018 or its equivalent. Only as a reference, the beneficiaries are advised to read the call [APCIN 2017](#)

Contract between Researchers from Japan and Spain

Co-PIs of projects' selected for funding must fix a common project start date, which will be the reference date for yearly and final reporting. This common project start date must be stated in the **Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA)**.

It will be the responsibility of the co-PIs' coordination to draw up an Agreement suitable to their own group in order to 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. The Co-PIs are responsible for sending the CRA signed by all partners to AMED and AEI-MINECO. This agreement will be made available to the concerned funding organisations. The project consortium is encouraged to sign this CRA before the official project start date, and in any case **no later than six**

months after the official project start date. Please note that national regulations may apply concerning the requirement for a CRA. Further instructions will be provided by the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS) to the co-PIs of the projects selected for funding.

III. Application

Application Forms

All co-applicants are required to submit a joint application form written in English. The application form could be downloaded from the links below:

Japan-Based Applicants:

https://www.amed.go.jp/koubo/03/01/0301B_00019.html (Japanese)

https://www.amed.go.jp/en/news/program/0301B_00004.html (English)

Spain-Based Applicants:

<http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/portal/site/MICINN/menuitem.edc7f2029a2be27d7010721001432ea0/?vgnnextoid=e1dc29f272c62610VgnVCM1000001d04140aRCRD#>

NOTE: The Japan and Spanish-based co-applicants shall use the appropriate application form issued by AMED and AEI-MINECO. The co-applicants from Japan and Spain shall work together to write a **single proposal** and apply electronically as designated in the next section (Submission of Application Forms). The same joint application form should be submitted twice: Japanese co-applicants to AMED and Spanish co-applicants shall submit to AEI-MINECO.

The application shall include the following basic common information:

- a) A project description stating how the collaboration will be conducted, with clear statements of what roles the Japan- and Spanish-based researchers will play in the project.
- b) The expected outcome(s) of the proposed project, including scientific objectives, and the project's relevance to industry and society.
- c) The ongoing activities and specific expertise of the Japan and Spanish groups, which form the basis for the proposed joint project, including how the skills, technology and other resources in each group complement each other. Also, details of any existing links between the groups.
- d) The expected added value from the proposed joint project, and how this will help strengthen research collaboration between Japan and the Spain over the longer term.
- e) A discussion of how the proposed joint project compares with other comparable activities elsewhere in the world.

Submission of Application Forms

Japan-based co-applicants should electronically submit their application forms to AMED by **19:00 pm** (Japanese Standard Time) on **12th of June 2018**, through online application system, e-Rad (<http://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html>).

Spanish-based co-applicants should electronically submit their application forms to AEI-MINECO by **12:00** (Spanish time) on **12th of June 2018**. The application will be announced in brief.

IV. Evaluation of Project Proposals

Joint Committee consisting of international experts will evaluate all proposals and make a selection. Based on the results of the evaluation, AMED and AEI-MINECO will jointly make a common decision regarding funding of the selected proposals.

Proposals will be assessed according to specific evaluation criteria using a common evaluation form as long as the proposals are within the scope (proposals not fitting with the scope of the call will not be further evaluated). A scoring system from 1 to 10 will be used to evaluate the proposal's performance with respect to the different evaluation criteria.

Scoring system:

Score	Category
1	Extremely Poor
2	Very Poor
3	Poor
4	Marginal
5	Fair

Score	Category
6	Good
7	Very good
8	Excellent
9	Outstanding
10	Exceptional

Evaluation criteria:

1. Compatibility with the program's purpose
The proposed activity shall conform to the aims of the program and the research fields that the program designates.
2. Excellence: Scientific/technological significance and advantage
 - a. Scientific & technological quality of the proposal and the sufficiency of the current technological level and previous performance.
 - b. Originality; novelty; innovation potential; methodology; degree of technological maturity;
 - c. Contribution of the generation of new technologies.
 - d. Contribution to the advancement of the field of medicine and compatibleness with national policies regarding R&D in the field of medicine; respond to social needs.
 - e. Value of the proposed approach clearly demonstrating the added value of the application of nanotechnology;
 - f. Quality of the project consortium: international competitiveness of participants in the field(s), previous work and expertise of the participants, participation of junior researchers.
3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation/Appropriateness of the plan
 - a. Quality of project plan; Clearness of the overall content and objectives of the plan; No unreasonable duplication/excessive concentration

- b. Adequateness of the work package structure and work plan (tasks, matching events, time schedule); appropriate efforts of the co-applicants.
 - c. Appropriately having an R&D system centered on the co-PIs been organized
Balanced participation of project partners and integration of workload in the different work packages, quality and efficiency of the coordination; management and networking
 - d. Scientific justification and adequateness of the requested budget;
 - e. The compliance with laws; Risk assessment, safety, regulatory and ethics issues properly addressed (when necessary).
4. Impact
- a. Unmet medical need addressed and potential impact in clinics;
 - b. Translatability and marketability of the proposed approach;
 - c. Added value of the international collaboration; Effectiveness and Synergy of Cooperative Research project; exchange of researchers, joint discussion meetings or workshops to ensure the best synergistic effect can be expected from the collaboration;
 - d. Expected time for market/transfer to patient towards clinical/public health applications, pharmaceutical/health device applications, and other industrial applications.

Announcement of Decision

Successful co-applicants will be notified of the final decision by AMED and AEI-MINECO by October 2018.

V. Responsibilities of Research Leaders after Proposals are Approved

Responsibilities after the proposal has been approved, research leaders and their affiliated institutions will observe the following when carrying out the collaborative research and utilizing funds provided by AMED and AEI-MINECO.

1. Annual Progress Report

At the end of each project year for AEI-MINECO-funded projects; and at the end of each fiscal year for AMED-funded projects, the respective research leader should promptly submit a progress report.

It will also be necessary for each funded group to submit reports to AMED and AEI-MINECO in accordance with the respective regulation.

In addition, successful applicants could be asked to present the project results during dedicated Review Seminars.

2. Final Report

AMED-funded project: Final reports should be submitted before completion of the period of international collaborative research for final evaluation.

Joint final reports should be submitted within two (2) months after completion of the period of international collaborative research. The report includes a general summary compiled jointly by both the Japan and the Spanish research groups. If papers describing results of collaborative research are presented to academic journals, societies and so on, copies of such papers are to be attached to the final report.

It will also be necessary for each funded group to submit reports to AMED and AEI-MINECO in accordance with the respective regulation.

VI. Duration and extension of the project

The duration of a collaborative research project shall be no longer than three years (thirty-six (36) months) in total from the start date. Both Japan -based and Spain -based team starts project on same day under the coordination of JCS. In principle no extension of collaborative research project period is foreseen.

VII. Additional Information and Requirements for Researchers

Please see the annex sheets for such requirements:

補足公募要領 (Supplemental guideline: written in Japanese and English for only Japan-based co-applicants)

追加応募様式 (Additional application form: written in Japanese for only Japan-based co-applicants)

VIII. Contact Information

Japan-based co-applicants should contact the following for further information:

JCS at AMED

Department of International Affairs

Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development

Tel. +81(0)3-6870-2215 Fax +81(0)3-6870-2240

sicorp@amed.go.jp

Spain-based co-applicants should contact the following for further information:

JCS at AEI-MINECO

Subdivisión de Programas Científico-Técnico Transversales, Fortalecimiento y Excelencia.

Agencia Estatal de Investigación

Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad

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