



**AMED-A\*STAR Joint Funding**  
**“Cell Therapy – a focus on quality, efficacy and safety”**  
**Call for Collaborative Proposals (Due: July 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tue) 2019)**

**I. General Description**

**I-1. Joint Funding of Japan-Singapore Collaborative Research**

Based on the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) dated March 16th, 2016, Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (hereinafter referred to as “AMED”) and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research, Singapore (hereinafter referred to as “A\*STAR”) have expressed the desire to strengthen R&D cooperation between scientists in Japan and Singapore in the field of biomedical and scientific research. The AMED-A\*STAR joint call is therefore launched to take the AMED-A\*STAR engagement to a deeper level. For this call, “**Cell Therapy**” was selected as the specific research area.

**I-2. Aim of This Call and Research Field**

The aims of this call are to: 1) strengthen research collaborations between Japan and Singapore within the field of “**Cell Therapy – a focus on quality, efficacy and safety**”; and 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.

For the assistance of understanding, research projects should focus on critical quality attributes or assays as indicators of quality and safety for cell-based therapeutics (including Immunotherapy), and could involve the use (but not limited to) of cells, animals or human subjects.

This is operated under the Strategic International Collaborative Research Program (SICORP) between AMED and A\*STAR.

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 evaluation process and the management of projects on the Japanese side.



### I-3. Prospective Applicants

AMED and A\*STAR invite researchers based in Japan and Singapore to submit proposals for this call pertaining to the research area of "**Cell Therapy – a focus on quality, efficacy and safety**". 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 Singapore to work in partnership on research projects. Japan-based applicants will be funded by AMED, while Singapore-based applicants will be funded by A\*STAR. Eligibility to apply will be determined by the following national eligibility rules.

#### Eligibility for Japan-based co-applicants:

- a. The Japan-based co-applicants must be the early-stage investigators\* who will be the co-PIs for the project.
  - b. The Japan-based co-applicants must be affiliated with a domestic Japanese research institution, and conduct research there. Domestic research institutions on the Japanese side refer to universities, independent administrative institutions, national/public testing and research institutions, specially authorized corporations, public-service corporations and enterprises, etc. that must satisfy predetermined requirements specified by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan.
- Any individual who satisfies any of the following conditions is also eligible to apply as Japan-based Principal Investigator.
    - i) Researcher holding citizenship other than Japanese who belongs to a Japanese domestic research institution.
    - ii) Researcher who is not currently affiliated with a particular research institution, but who will be affiliated with a Japanese domestic research institution and able to conduct research there if selected as Japan-based Principal Investigator.
    - iii) Japanese researchers currently residing overseas who will be affiliated with a Japanese domestic research institution and able to conduct research there if selected as Japan-based Principal Investigator.
  - Japan-based Principal Investigator must be able to take responsibility for the duties of the entire project for the full duration of the joint research project.
  - Japan-based researchers from industry are eligible to participate in the joint research



project in the Japan-based Team.

Eligibility for Singapore-based co-applicants:

- a. The Singapore-based co-applicants must be early-stage investigators\* who will be the co-PIs for the project.
- b. The Singapore-based co-applicants must reside in Singapore and be full-time employed researchers at a public sector research organization in Singapore, including hospitals, universities, polytechnics, and A\*STAR research institutions, and they will carry out the proposed project at this institution.
- c. Researchers who are able to bear overall responsibility for an R&D project throughout the entire project period.
- d. For the avoidance of doubt, researchers from industry are not eligible to receive funding from A\*STAR, but may participate via a joint collaboration with the successful co-applicants. For further details, please refer to “V. Responsibilities of Research Leaders after Proposals are Approved.”

\* Early-stage investigator (ESI) – scientist who has completed a post-graduate education or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years.

This program will consider request on extension of the ESI status period for reasons that can include: medical concerns, disability, family care responsibilities, extended periods of clinical training, natural disasters, and active duty military service. Request will be determined on a case by case basis by AMED and A\*STAR

## **II. Financial Support**

Depending on the number of proposals submitted, it is anticipated that up to three (3) bilateral research projects will be funded by this Call.

### **II-1. Support by AMED and A\*STAR**

In this collaborative call, AMED and A\*STAR will fund up to three proposals, each at a total budget of no more than 21 million yen from AMED and no more than SGD\$250,000 from A\*STAR for the entire project duration. AMED will provide support for the researchers based in Japan, and A\*STAR will support researchers based in Singapore. The duration of a collaborative research project shall be no longer than three years (thirty-six (36) months) in



total from the start date.

## II-2. AMED

### II-2.1. 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 year, depending on the planned activities specific to each project.

Funding for Japan-based Teams are allowable for:

	Items	Standard definitions
Direct Cost	Goods	Costs for purchasing new equipment, supplies, trial pieces, software, books, reagents, materials and consumables.
	Travel	Expenses for travel by the R&D PI or research unit members and by invited persons.
	Personnel and Services	Annual salaries for research staff etc. employed for R&D objectives and honorariums, etc. for speakers, etc.
	Other	In addition to the above, costs required to accomplish the R&D objectives. Examples: Costs related to the presentation of research results (research paper submission fees, printing costs, HP-producing costs etc.), meeting expenses, transportation costs, equipment lease expenses, equipment repair costs, printing costs, software subcontract production costs, inspection costs, equivalent expenses to consumption tax regarding non-taxed transactions, etc.
Indirect Cost* <sup>1</sup>	Allocated in certain proportion to direct cost (within 30%), paid by AMED as required costs for managing the research institution to implement the contract R&D project and used by the research institution.	

\*1 Provided for the contract R&D agreement between AMED and a national university corporation, inter-university research institute corporation, national institute for education policy research, independent administrative agency, government-affiliated corporation, special private lending corporation, general incorporated association, general incorporation foundation, public interest incorporated association, public interest incorporated foundation, private enterprise, private university or similar organization, but not for researchers belonging to national institutes. Indirect costs are also allocated in proportion to the direct cost to the joint institution (excluding national institutes.)

### II-2.2. Contract between Japan-based Co-applicant 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-applicant'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.



## **II-3. A\*STAR**

### **II-3.1. Budget for Collaborative Research Projects**

The total budget for each project proposed by Singapore-based co-applicants over a full three (3)-year period (i.e. thirty-six (36) months) should not exceed two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) Singapore dollars in principle including indirect costs (Note: Indirect costs only apply to non-A\*STAR applicants. The project budget should not fund indirect costs for A\*STAR applicants). The planned budget for research projects may vary each year, depending on the planned activities specific to each project.

### **II.3.2. Funded Expenses**

This grant call is designed to support expenses relating to collaboration with a Japan counterpart for a Singapore-based researcher. The main research infrastructure essential to conducting the research project should be secured by each research group prior to the commencement of the collaboration.

Funding provided within this grant call is intended to enhance the capacity of the co-applicants to collaborate. Funding will therefore be provided in support of collaborative activities and may include some of the local research that is necessary for the collaboration. These may include:-

- Travel expenses
- Manpower expenses
- Equipment purchases
- Expenses for research-related consumables (OOE)

Please refer to the accompanying A\*STAR Grants Terms & Conditions and Guidelines for Managing A\*STAR Grants for more details on fundable and non-fundable items for this grant call.

### **II-3.3. Contract between Singapore Co-applicant and A\*STAR**

The awarded projects will be subjected to the Terms and Conditions set by A\*STAR. Management of the projects will be accordance to the A\*STAR Guidelines for Managing A\*STAR Grants. Arrangements relating to intellectual property rights (including copyright and patent rights) and commercialization of such intellectual property shall be in accordance with the Terms and Conditions applicable to the award as determined by A\*STAR.



#### **II-4. Contract between Researchers from Japan and Singapore**

It is required that a Research Collaborative Agreement (RCA) be signed for any joint research collaboration. In the interest of encouraging meaningful collaborations, the concerned parties are requested to engage in appropriate discussions and negotiations to determine issues such as ownership of any arising intellectual properties and each party's rights and obligations under the collaboration. Reference to this joint guideline should be stated within the contract drawn by the Japan and Singapore institutions. RCA should be turned in to the AMED and A\*STAR by the respective researchers within 1 year of award start date, failing which the institutes reserves the right to terminate further fund disbursements.



### **III. Application**

#### **III-1. Application Forms**

All co-applicants are required to submit the application forms written in English.

NOTE: The Japan and Singapore-based co-applicants shall use the appropriate application form issued by AMED and A\*STAR. The co-applicants from Japan and Singapore shall work together to write a proposal and apply electronically as designated in III-2. Submission of Application Forms.

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 Singapore-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 Singapore and Japan 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 Singapore over the longer term.
- e) A discussion of how the proposed joint project compares with other comparable activities elsewhere in the world.

#### **III-2. Submission of Application Forms**

Japan-based co-applicants should electronically submit their application forms to AMED by 17:00 (Japanese Standard Time) on July 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tue) 2019, through online application system, e-Rad (<http://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html>).

Singapore-based co-applicants should electronically submit their application forms to BMRC, A\*STAR by 17:00 (Singapore Standard Time) on July 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tue) 2019, via <https://app.a-star.edu.sg/igrants/>





## **IV. Evaluation of Project Proposals**

Joint Committee consisting of experts will evaluate all proposals and make a selection. Based on the results of the evaluation, AMED and A\*STAR will jointly make a common decision regarding funding of the selected proposals.

### **IV-1. Evaluation Criteria**

The following general evaluation criteria will apply to each application:

#### **1) Conformity with Program Aims and Designated Research Fields**

The proposed activity shall conform to the aims of the program and the research fields that the program designates.

#### **2) Capability of Research Leaders**

The research leaders in both countries shall have the insight or experience (or potential) necessary for pursuing the activity and the ability to manage the collaboration and reach the project goals during this program's period of support.

#### **3) Effectiveness and Synergy of Collaborative Research Project**

The proposed research activity shall be eminent, creative and at an internationally high level in an attempt to produce a significant impact on the development of future science and technology or to solve global and regional common issues or to create innovative technological seeds that can contribute to the creation of new industries in the future.

Moreover, proposed research activities that can be expected to create synergy through collaborative research with the counterpart institution will be preferred. Such synergy could be attained through, for example, the acquisition and/or application of knowledge, skill and/or know-how of the counterpart researcher.

#### **4) Feasibility of Research Plan**

The sharing of research activities with the counterpart research institute and the planning of research expenses shall be adequate to realise the proposed research activity.

### **IV-2. Announcement of Decision**

Successful co-applicants will be notified of the final decision by AMED and A\*STAR in November 2019.



## **V. Responsibilities of Research Leaders after Proposals are Approved**

### **V-1. Responsibilities**

After the proposal has been approved, research leaders and their affiliated institutions will observe the following when carrying out the collaborative research and utilising funds provided by AMED and A\*STAR.

#### **1. Annual Progress Report**

At the end of each project year for A\*STAR-funded projects; and at the end of each fiscal year for AMED-funded projects, the respective research leader should promptly submit a progress report within two (2) months after the end of the project year (for A\*STAR-funded projects) and within two (2) months after the end of the fiscal year (for AMED-funded projects), and the institution with which the research leader is affiliated shall promptly submit a financial report to AMED and A\*STAR that funds that project.

#### **2. Final Report**

Final reports should be submitted within three (3) months and three (3) months to AMED and A\*STAR respectively after completion of the period of international collaborative research. The report includes a general summary (maximum five A4-sized pages) compiled jointly by both the Japan and the Singapore 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.

#### **3. Participation at AMED-A\*STAR Joint Workshop (when applicable)**

Research leaders should jointly present their work during AMED-A\*STAR Joint Workshop when applicable. Respective leaders will be notified by AMED and A\*STAR when the Joint Workshop takes place. Joint workshop could be held either in Singapore or Japan.

## **VI. Additional Information and Requirements for Researchers**

Please see the annex sheets for such requirements:

Annex A: A\*STAR Grant T&TCs

Annex B: Guidelines for Managing A\*STAR Grants

補足公募要領 (written in Japanese for only Japan-based co-applicants)

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



## **VII. Contact Information**

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

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

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