

International call for applications

“Connect Talent”

Specifications

1. Context and objectives of the “Connect Talent” international call for applications

The “Connect Talent” international call for applications is designed to provide support for **breakthrough projects**, i.e. projects whose ambitions and potential are aimed at meeting one or more of the major scientific or technological challenges of our times in a disciplinary field or in a cross-disciplinary logic, and whose social and economic impacts over the medium and long term are unquestionable. It must be an ambitious project, capable of significantly accelerating the current dynamics in our region and providing the region with scientific and academic recognition, reputation and attractiveness worldwide.

This call for applications is aimed at operations to attract researchers and research professors and is intended for **leading international scientists**, alone or with a team, with a view to accelerating the development of an existing topic that is considered as strategic in the region, in particular production technologies, healthcare, the sea, plants, foodstuffs, as well as cross-cutting topics in digital technologies, electronics and the human and social sciences.

A leading scientist means a researcher with unquestioned international recognition (quality and dynamics in terms of scientific production, number of citations, scientific distinctions – notably from the European Research Council, the team's or the scientific leader's international openness, scope of existing industrial relations, etc.).

The “Connect Talent” call for applications **gives priority to having this leading scientist set up for the long term** at a laboratory in the Pays de la Loire region.

A strong commitment from the host organization or establishment and from the laboratory is expected for each application submitted, notably in terms of the researcher's integration.

2. Calendar for the call for projects and application assessment process

2.1 Calendar for the call for projects

The calendar and methods for filing applications with the Region will be indicated on the Pays de la Loire Region's website when the call is launched.

The applications will be filed with the Pays de la Loire Region **as well as with**:

- the urban authority of the host area (Nantes Métropole, Angers Loire Métropole, Le Mans Métropole, etc.);
- and, where applicable, the European aid platform (ERDF service in the Pays de la Loire Region): https://portail.synergie.asp-public.fr/e_synergie/portail/pays-de-la-loire.

The applicant must make sure that all sections have been completed. The project will be accompanied by a financial model in Excel format, as proposed in the application file.

2.2 Analysis and selection process for application files

The project analysis and pre-selection process is organized into the following steps:

Step 1: an “admissibility” analysis of the application in terms of compliance with the call's specifications and with the application file format.

Step 2: a substantive analysis of the application file for 3 criteria: project quality and ambition, added value and impacts, feasibility – for which external expertise will be called upon.

Step 3: an examination by external experts will lead to a pre-selection of applications. The applicants will be audited by the Regional Advisory Committee for Technological Research and Development.

Each applicant may be asked to provide the Region with further information on his/her project for a more detailed qualification of it (co-financing, duration, expected results, etc.).

Step 4: final decision by the regional elected officials at the Permanent Commission of the Regional Council.

2.3 Assessment criteria for application files

Applications will mainly be examined according to the following criteria:

- **Scientific, technological and innovative ambition and quality; challenges addressed**

Applicants must have a high academic level and unquestioned international recognition. They must promote a scientific project that includes risk-taking with great ambition for international visibility (importance of the social and scientific challenges addressed, the potential of the main research topic, openness to new scientific questions and progress in knowledge in relation to the current state of the art, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary contributions, development strategy for research production, etc.).

- **Added value, impact, knock-on effect**

The applications proposed must demonstrate their added value and the impacts expected in terms of:

- Acceleration of structures and of the scientific, technological and training dynamics on the regional level;
- Expected impacts of the project in academic, economic and human terms, on the dynamics of innovation (new collaborations with academic and industrial structures in the area and the players in innovation);
- Added value in terms of international attractiveness for the Pays de la Loire region;
- Acquisition of new, internationally recognized know-how and expertise, improvement in knowledge and development of major innovations (patents, publications, etc.).

- **Feasibility**

The applications proposed must present the initial elements for analyzing feasibility:

- Economic sizing of the project, and notably:
 - Its cost;
 - Methods for obtaining regional support and provisional financing;
 - Human and financial commitments foreseen from public and private partners.
- Overall feasibility of the project and key factors for its success:
 - Its general organization: methods for setting up the network and collaborations, effectiveness and durability of the project through ad hoc governance, if need be;
 - Planned calendar;
 - Technical and human resources;
 - Necessary partnerships and interfaces with other initiatives interacting with the project.

3. Methods of regional support

When filing an application, the project developer recognizes that he/she is aware of the community guidelines for State aid in research, development and innovation, 2014/C 198/01 – JOUE 26/06/2014 C198/1, and notably point 2, and to have informed the partners in the research project thereof. He/She is in compliance with the terms and conditions to ensure that public financing does not come under the category of State aid.

3.1 Project sizing

Projects will have to have a duration of 3 to 5 years.

Co-financing must be indicated in the provisional finance plan: host organization or institution, host laboratory, local authorities, contractual contributions, other, etc.

Special attention will be paid to contributions from the relevant oversight authorities.

3.2 Eligible expenses

Eligible expenses only include those new expenses produced by the project and do not take into account recurrent expenses at the institutions (including salaries for permanent staff and overheads).

The following expenses are eligible:

- equipment (strictly necessary for the project);
- consumables and small equipment (NB: only those awardees benefiting from the regional subsidy can take advantage of computer equipment (laptops, tablets, etc.) financed by the Region);
- expenses related to hosting and coordination;
- mission expenses, travel expenses, accommodation at a foreign project partner's laboratory;
- expenses for studies, analyses, services provided by entities outside the organization and giving rise to billing;
- expenses related to academic promotional actions (mission expenses, travel expenses).

Salaries and social contributions only for non-tenured contractual staff:

- graduate students (*), post-grads and interns;
- fixed-term contracts for engineers, technicians and engineering assistants.

Expenses that are not eligible notably include:

- management costs;
- costs of rentals/use of facilities already receiving support from the Pays de la Loire Region.

(*)All doctoral grants requested from the regional subsidy must be co-financed. The Region will contribute a maximum of 50% of the total cost of the thesis, for a maximum amount of €55,000.

If a research grant is provided with co-financing for the project (other than in the aforementioned case), the connection between the work performed by the graduate student or post-graduate student and the project filed must be clearly explained.