



INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR COLLABORATIVE PROPOSALS IN COVID-19 RESEARCH

Guidance for Applicants

Call status: Open

Start of the Applications: June 12, 2020 (09:00 am Turkish Time and Beijing Time)

Closing date for Applications: August 7, 2020 (04:00 pm Beijing Time and 05:00 pm Turkish Time)

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I. Summary

On March 11, 2020, the coronavirus outbreak was declared a global pandemic by the WHO. The spread and potential lasting existence of the COVID-19 pose severe threats to the world. In face of the global challenge, joint efforts of science funding agencies, based on the principles of equality, openness and mutual benefits, are urgently needed to accelerate the R&D activities against the novel coronavirus. To mobilize scientific communities and facilitate research responses to COVID-19, National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) are opening a call for collaborative proposals in COVID-19 research.

The purpose of the call is to build on the combined strengths of academic research groups within China and Turkey to work together on collaborative research that will advance the understanding of the coronaviruses (SARS-CoV-2) and the illness it causes (COVID-19), in order to contribute to the global response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Applicants are invited to submit **bilateral** collaborative research proposals comprising eligible researchers from China and Turkey. This call for proposals will require applicants to work together in partnership within transnational teams on research projects where each country's component is funded by the respective funding agency. Eligibility to apply is determined by each agency's eligibility rules and the nature of the resources requested must also adhere to each agency's guidelines. Further information is presented below and within **Annexes**. Applicants wishing to apply to the call must use the specific **Joint Project Description (JPD) Template** associated with this call (Annex 1).

Project duration is 24 months.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is: 7 August 2020 for applicants.

II. Scope of the Call

Based on the research agenda defined by the WHO¹, the priorities identified by the participating funding agencies, as well as the research capacity in China and Turkey, the scope of collaborative research will include:

- Screening and development of broad-spectrum anti-coronavirus drugs;
- Research and development of anti-coronavirus vaccine;
- Etiology and pathogenic mechanisms of animal-derived viruses and protective immune mechanisms against virus;
- New technologies for rapid and precise diagnosis of coronavirus
- Public health management, operational sciences, health delivery sciences and social and behavioural aspects of emergency public health response

The funding agencies wish to develop and strengthen transnational collaborations and to support collaborations which will have a real impact in this field. Applicants must successfully

¹<https://www.glopid-r.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/who-2019-novel-coronavirus-global-research-roadmap.pdf>

demonstrate the sustainability of the collaboration and the potential impact of the activities proposed.

III. Funding available

The projects will be supported with grants in accordance with the respective national funding regulations. Details are set out in the relevant country annexes.

NSFC:

Chinese partners that are eligible for funding can receive up to ¥1.5 million for projects of 24 months. NSFC-funded costs of each grant will be issued and managed by NSFC according to its funding guidelines and procedures.

TUBITAK:

TÜBİTAK funds up to 720.000 Turkish Liras (excl. overhead and Project Incentive Premium-PIP) per project under the financial principles of TÜBİTAK 1071 Program (please check the application rules for Turkish side:

https://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/3125/1071_arastirma_projeleri_surec_dokumani.pdf

IV. Eligibility

Each collaborative research proposal must involve at a minimum one eligible Principal Investigator based in the China and one eligible Principal Investigator based in Turkey.

All applicants must adhere to national eligibility rules for research proposals as set out in the relevant country annexes. Any queries concerning eligibility should be addressed to the contact persons of the respective funding agencies.

Principal Investigators need to ensure that they and any Co-Investigators included on the application are eligible. **Applications involving any ineligible applicants** (from China or Turkey) **will result in the whole application being rejected.**

V. Application

For each proposal, the Chinese PI must apply using NSFC's ISISN system (<http://isisn.nsf.gov.cn/egrantweb/>) by completing a standard NSFC grant application along with the JPD in English. The Turkish PI must apply using details are set out in the relevant country **Annexes**.

Please note the JPD must be jointly composed by the consortia. The applicants must submit the JPD to their country's funder respectively. The JPD will be the most important material for evaluation. A template of the JPD is presented at **ANNEX 1**.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is: **7 August 2020**.

Collaboration Agreement

As the research projects will be carried out by bilateral project partners, the basis of collaboration between the project partners, including ownership of intellectual property (IP) generated during the project and rights to exploitation, and IP management is expected to be set out in a collaboration agreement between the Principal Investigators involved. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigators to put such an agreement in place **before the research begins**. The terms of collaboration must not conflict with the funding agencies terms and conditions and national law.

Arrangements for collaboration and/or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of academic research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with academic custom and practise and the requirements of the funding bodies.

Details of key issues included in the Collaboration Agreement, for example management of IP, should be described in **JPD**. The full Collaboration Agreement must be available to be shared with the funders once the project is approved.

VI. Evaluation

Each funding agency will carry out eligibility and internal checks and agree which proposals will go forward for assessment. Only proposals that fit the call topics mentioned in Part II of this call will be evaluated and funded.

Eligible proposals will be subject to the independent evaluation by the funding agencies. Each funding agency will first establish its respective ranking list of proposals according to the evaluation result. Then a common ranking list will be developed based on a joint panel meeting organized by NSFC and TÜBİTAK with panellists recommended by the two funding agencies. The final decision on projects to be funded will be made based on the common ranking list and within available budget of funding agencies.

Assessment Criteria

To be funded, proposals must be internationally competitive and at a standard equivalent to that normally expected to be supported by each funding organisation.

Assessment criteria for NSFC include:

- Relevance of the proposal to the call
- Scientific and technical quality of the proposal
- Project management, methodology, workplan, milestones
- Quality of the consortium
- Mobilization of resources

Assessment criteria for TÜBİTAK include:

- Scientific/Technological Excellence
- Methodology
- Project Management
- Importance of International Collaboration
- Impact

For further information about the assessment process, please refer to Country Annexes.

In addition to the assessment criteria, applicants should carefully demonstrate within the JPD that their projects:

- Represent true collaborative partnerships between transnational research teams; the added value of such collaborations should be clearly highlighted within the proposals.
- Contain an integrated work plan and an equal commitment to the project (in terms of hours dedicated to the project rather than project costs). Projects that appear to be working in parallel with little interaction between countries will not be supported.

Applicants who receive funding from this call must be prepared to contribute to workshops and/or other networking activities associated with this call.

VII. Additional Considerations

Ethical issues

Proposals that involve experiments on animals and/or human must be conducted in such a way that is in accordance with the laws and regulations that is applicable in each country.

All countries where research will be undertaken should be identified. The following special issues should be taken into account:

- If the project involves ethical content, the applicant must provide the Ethical Approval from Ethics Committees of their own or relevant authority as the attachment to the proposal for Chinese side. Turkish side shall provide the Ethical Approval Form only if their project is selected to be funded.
- If the project involves Informed Consent Form, the relevant regulations must be followed.

Data management and transfer of materials

Collection and exchange of data and materials must be in strict compliance with the funding agencies terms and the legislation in effect in the respective countries.

VIII. Reporting

The projects will be monitored through progress reports and the final report by respective funding agencies for its content and progress.

IX. Timetable

Call Opens	June 12, 2020 (09:00 a.m Turkish Time and Beijing Time)
Call Closes	August 7, 2020 (04:00 p.m Beijing Time and 05:00 p.m Turkish Time)
Grants start	January 2021

X. Contacts

Funding Agency	Contact
NSFC	Mr. ZHONG Qi Email: zhongqi@nsfc.gov.cn Telephone: +86 10 6232 7005
TÜBİTAK	Güliz Sütçü, Ph.D E-mail: guliz.sutcu@tubitak.gov.tr Telephone: 0090 312 298 1881

Annex:**Additional guidance for Turkish applicants**

Funding Agency	The Scientific and Technological Research Council (TÜBİTAK)
Eligibility	<p>Only projects that fit to the call topics mentioned in the Call Guidance can be funded.</p> <p>Proposals may be submitted by academy, public or private sector. All Turkish researchers applying to this call should be registered at TÜBİTAK ARBİS (Researcher Information system) through the following link: https://arbis.tubitak.gov.tr.</p> <p>The Principal Investigator (PI), is expected to hold a PhD degree if he/she is from the academy. If the PI is from the public or private sector, he/she must have a BA/BSc Degree. Also, if the PI is from the private sector, he/she must be working there full-time for at least a minimum of 6 months.</p> <p>Further information available at: https://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/3125/1071_arastirma_projeleri_surec_dokumani.pdf</p>
Budget	<p>TÜBİTAK funds up to 720.000 Turkish Liras (excl. overhead and Project Incentive Premium-PIP) per project under the financial principles of TÜBİTAK 1071 Program.</p> <p>Please check the application rules for Turkish side, https://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/3125/1071_arastirma_projeleri_surec_dokumani.pdf</p> <p>Total duration of international visits should not exceed two months (60 days) per year for the each supported joint research project. In the case of bilateral travel, economic class air tickets and daily allowance shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of the per diem Law No. 6245.</p> <p>The costs of exchange of experts, scientists and other specialists will be covered on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The sending Party will meet all related costs connected with travel, lodging and allowances according to their own regulations.•The sending Party shall be responsible for the emergency health insurance of its scientists.
Eligible costs	<p>For eligible costs, please check https://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/3125/1071_arastirma_projeleri_surec_dokumani.pdf</p>
Documents required	<p>The partners should come to an agreement with each other using their own means of communication and jointly develop and complete their project proposal before submitting it to TÜBİTAK. The proposals should be jointly prepared by all partners and should be prepared in English. Project proposals must provide detailed information on the objectives and justification of the planned joint research work, the methodology to be followed, the composition of each research team and the intended time schedule.</p> <p>Turkish partners will make their joint online application via TÜBİTAK's Project Application System (http://uidb-pbs.tubitak.gov.tr). Turkish partners will use E-Signature for their applications. Detailed information can be achieved via http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/281/ardeb_e-imza_yardim_dokumani.pdf.</p>
Submission process	<p>There is no need to submit any hard copy of the proposal to TÜBİTAK.</p> <p>For Turkish partners the online system will be closed on 7 August 2020, 17:00 (Turkish Time) and they should finalize the E-Signatures until 12 August 2020,</p>

	17:00 (Turkish Time).
Assessment	There will be a two stage evaluation process. At the first stage, each proposal will be reviewed by 3 peer reviewers. At the second stage, a joint panel will develop a final ranking list of all proposals based on the evaluation results of all funding agencies.
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