

Q&A for the public call for a project manager (PM) in Moonshot research and development project for agriculture, forestry and fisheries

Note: For the Q&A the Japanese version is official, and the English translation is provisional for reference purpose.

	No.	Question	Answer
General remarks	1	May I have a consultation directly with the Program Director (PD)?	It is prohibited to directly consult with the PD regarding the content of the call for proposals and the screening process.
	2	Until when can I make inquiries regarding the public call while the application period for it is until 12:00 on Tuesday, May 9, 2023?	Please contact the following e-mail address for inquiries regarding the public call until the application deadline. It may be difficult to answer depending on the content and timing of your question, so please contact us as soon as possible. Email: seiken-moonshot[at]ml.affrc.go.jp Please replace [at] with @. Inquiries regarding the public call in general Strategic Research and Development Division, Project Promotion Department, BRAIN Inquiries regarding contract affairs Research Management Division, Research Management Department, BRAIN
	3	Is it possible to have a face-to-face individual consultation instead of email?	We will not arrange face-to-face individual consultations from the perspective of fairness, such as the degree of difficulty of accessing BRAIN. Please contact us by email.
	4	While the description for both the PM candidate and the project plan proposal are required, will be the both adopted?	In this public call, while it is required to submit project plan proposals, the target of the adoption is PMs. After adoption, under the direction of the PD, the PM will elaborate the project and brush up the project plan proposal.
Project period	1	Can the period for research implementation be for 2 years? Will it not be adopted unless it is a proposal for continuous implementation (up to 7 years)?	The implementation period of the research adopted by this public call is until the end of FY2024 (March, 2025). Based on the results of the evaluation to be carried out first half of FY2024, it will be possible to continue the research for another five years. It is also possible to propose a research plan for a short period that does not presuppose continuous implementation over the another five years. In addition, depending on the results of the research evaluation, and so on, the originally planned research implementation period may be changed or terminated. Please keep this in mind.
	2	How many years of contract is the commissioned contract? What will happen to the contract if the evaluation result terminates the project?	For the commissioned contract, a multi-year contract until the end of FY2024 shall be concluded with the research institution (representative organization) to which the PM belongs. If the project is canceled due to evaluation results, and so on, the contract will also be terminated. Liquidation procedures are normally carried out at the end of the fiscal year.
Budget scale/ project scale	1	What scale is the annual budget?	We plan to allocate a maximum of 650 million yen in total for the adopted projects in the public call this time. None of the maximum amount of budget per project nor lower limit is set. In addition, as an incidental condition at the time of adoption, we may ask you to change the implementation plan, including the budget amount and research implementation system. And during the process of elaborating the project after adoption, we may likewise ask you to change the implementation plan as well. Please keep this in mind.

	No.	Question	Answer
	2	How many PMs do you plan to adopt? Is it possible to make an interdisciplinary proposal?	Several PMs are scheduled to be adopted within the scope of the fund (650 million yen) allocated for this public call project. We plan to select multiple PMs in each of the fields of social science and natural science. Interdisciplinary proposals that include both fields and proposals based on "holistic knowledge" (proposals that fully utilize the wisdom of all related fields to solve problems) are also subject to screening.
	3	The maximum project period for MS Goal 5 is 10 years, and a fund of 8XX million yen has been created as a budget for five years from the start of research. Will the budget for fiscal 2025 and beyond, the sixth year, be secured?	The budget for FY2025 and beyond has yet to be determined.
Application requirements, and others	1	It is mentioned that the research group consists of multiple research institutes, and others. How many institutes are required? Is it mandatory to involve private companies?	We have not set a specific number, but please make your proposal in the form of surely including the organizations necessary for the execution of the project. Participation of private companies is an essential condition. The participation of a private company must become definite before the contract is concluded.
	2	Can research groups include institutions other than research institutes?	Since this project is a research and development project, in principle, the research institution that directly implements the research and development project participates. However, to achieve the Moonshot goal (MS goal), if you want to have the necessary institutions participate, please fill in the "Division of Roles" column of each institution/organization in "4. Composition of the research group" of Annex 5 and describe the reason why you would like to have an organization other than a research institution participate in.
	3	Is it possible to apply if a PM candidate is planning to change his/her institution?	PM candidate should be an applicant, and the institution he/she belongs to at the time of application should be the representative institution. During the review period, the representative institution cannot be changed. If there is a special change in the circumstances of the research institutes that make up the research group after the PM is selected and before the contract is concluded, and if it is judged that it is difficult to conduct the research, as long as the requirements for the representative organization (the requirements described in 3-(3) of the application guidelines) are met and the PM can continue activities without hindrance, it is possible to change the representative organization if the approval of the PD can be obtained. If, a PM candidate's affiliated institution is scheduled to be changed at the time of application, please describe the reason and timing for the change in the "Division of Roles" column of each institution/organization in "4. Composition of the research group" of Annex 5 and fill in the information, and others exactly related to the new research institution.
	4	Can the PM candidate who has not Japanese nationality apply?	He/She can, however, after the appointment, the basic rule is to have him/her to put a base in Japan.

No.	Question	Answer
5	Is it possible to apply if the institution to which the PM candidate (applicant) belongs is a foreign company or overseas university?	In the case of a foreign company, the company must have juridical personality in Japan and have a base of operations in Japan (application guidelines p.11). You can apply even if you are affiliated with an overseas university as it can be a representative organization if the university has juridical personality in Japan. However, after adoption, it is necessary to establish a base of activities in Japan.
6	How much the effort of PM is necessary?	There is no numerical standard for the effort (scheduled ratio [%] of time allocated to this research and development in the applicant's total work), but please set an effort that will surely fulfill your role as PM. Please note that the effort may be reset after coordination with the PD after adoption.
7	While it is said that the research institutions that make up the research group must be financially stable and that if the financial situation is judged to be extremely unstable, the research and development institution may be removed from the research group, what is the situation?	The financial status of each research institution shall be filled in "8. Information of the participation institutions" of Annex 5 Project Plan Proposal. The financial situation of the applicant (research group) will be determined here. For example, if all items are negative for a project period until the end of FY2024, we may judge the financial situation to be unstable.
8	Is it possible for foreign companies and overseas research institutions to participate in as collaborative research institutions or cooperating organizations? Also, is it required for foreign companies and overseas research institutes to participate in?	If they meet the requirements for collaborative research institutions or cooperating organizations (p.7-8 of the application guidelines), and they have a contact point or agent in Japan, and they comply with Japan's intellectual property rules (p.17 of the application guidelines), it is possible for foreign companies and overseas research institutes to participate in. Although the participation of foreign companies and overseas research institutions is not mandatory, the Moonshot Research and Development Program shall gather the wisdom of researchers from around the world under the leadership of top researchers who lead cutting-edge research in order to achieve the MS goals. Based on this purpose, we encourage foreign companies and overseas research institutes to participate as collaborative research institutes. Please consult with the PM candidate and actively consider it.
9	There are three methods for establishing a research consortium: the "individual agreement method," the "agreement in the joint names method," and the "joint research agreement method." What is the difference?	The difference in the establishment method of the research consortium is as follows. (i) Separated agreement for joining the Consortium: Method in which Consortium Terms and Condition are drawn up regarding the implementation of commissioned projects, and so on, and obtaining collective or individual agreement of each research organization joining to the Consortium in a written consent separate from the Consortium Terms and Condition. (ii) Agreement in the joint names in the Consortium Terms and Condition: Method in which Consortium Terms and Condition are drawn up regarding the implementation of commissioned projects, and so on, and the research institutes that make up the research group exchange an agreement jointly signed in the Consortium Terms and Condition. (iii) Joint Research Agreement between organizations: Method of concluding a joint research institution agreement between research institutions that make up a research group to jointly implement a commissioned project. The above Consortium Terms and Condition, written consent, agreements, and joint research institution agreement templates are shown in Appendix 3, Appendix 7, Appendix 8, and Appendix 9 of Annex 6, respectively.
10	Is it essential for private companies to participate in even when applying for the social science field?	Participation of private companies is an essential condition. If it does not become definite at the time of proposal, it is necessary to do so before the contract is concluded.

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	11	It is said that "by full use of unused biological functions, and others", but what is "and others?" Is there any specific image?	Examples of "and others" such as biological functions include natural circulation functions. In addition, the content that eliminates the waste of food and promotes rational consumption behavior for food in consideration of health and environment could be eligible.
	12	Does the research for making medicine from food loss (agricultural products and foods that were produced but couldn't eat) become	If it is a proposal to reduce the food loss, it will be eligible. In general, it seems that pharmaceutical production does not require a large amount of food residue or unused foods compared to food, but it is subject to screening if it is a proposal that breaks over the common sense and contributes to the depreciation of food loss.
	13	There is an insect project among the same food consumption target, but is it possible to be a proposal through insects this time?	Currently, we are conducting research to reduce food loss using insects in a project of MS5. Similar proposals are not attractive, but if it is a suggestion to reduce food loss with different approaches, it becomes eligible for screening.
	14	The numerical values shown by WWF are considerably different between developed and developing countries. Based on this, is it okay to make a proposal that focuses on either one?	There is no problem to narrow down the food loss to be reduced, but it is necessary to clarify the food loss to be reduced.
	15	Is the research targeting Africa eligible?	The proposal focusing on the area can be also accepted. It is necessary to clarify the food loss to be reduced.
Commissioned funds	1	It is stated that the ratio of indirect expenses varies depending on the research institution. Please instruct the specific ratio.	<p>The indirect cost rate differs for each research institution.</p> <p>In particular, following amounts can be accounted for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within 15% for universities, and others*1 (for universities, and others, if the necessary indirect expenses will be allocated to such as laboratories which are directly engaged in the commissioned project, it is possible to add up to 15%), - Within 15% for national research and development agencies, and others*2 - Within 10% for companies (excluding small and medium-sized enterprises), - Within 20% for SMEs and technology research associations <p>*1. School corporations such as national university corporations, public universities, and private universities *2. National and public research institutes, public testing and research institutes, public research institutes such as independent administrative agencies, institutions with a public nature such as public interest corporations</p>

No.	Question	Answer
2	Are subcontracting of research and outsourcing of work eligible for support?	<p>Since this project is a project based on the research consortium method, subcontracting to organizations other than the research consortium is not permitted.</p> <p>If research elements are included in the content of research and development or work, the institution that directly conducts the relevant research or work must participate in the research consortium from the beginning.</p> <p>In addition, outsourcing of simple work that does not include research and development elements can be treated as miscellaneous service expenses. As a specific example, in case of developing and designing an application in research, it is possible to cover by the expense for research if research consortium sets the specifications of the application and orders only the creation of a simple application to an external company.</p> <p>On the other hand, if the content of the outsourced application itself has research elements, it will be regarded as a re-entrustment of the contracted research and cannot be outsourced, so the company to be ordered must participate in the research consortium as a collaborative research institution.</p>
3	Will improvements and modifications to existing facilities be an eligible expense?	<p>If it can be treated as a prototype for research by this project, it is possible to include expenses related to the improvement and modification of machines and facilities, including existing equipment, as eligible expenses.</p> <p>In addition, if a machine or facility that has passed its useful life to some extent is modified, including substantial repairs, or modified to extend its useful life, a certain amount of caution is required because the "asset price" and "remaining period of useful life" of the prototype may be affected.</p>
4	To whom will the research funds be provided if the project is adopted and contracted?	<p>The research funds are scheduled to be delivered to the representative organization of the research consortium from the Bio-oriented Technology Research Advancement Institution (BRAIN), National Agriculture and Food Research Organization.</p> <p>The representative organization that receives the research funds will distribute the research funds to the collaborative research institutions, and others based on the regulations, and so on within the research consortium.</p> <p>Yet, if the research management administrative body is established, the relevant work will be performed on behalf of the representative organization.</p>

	No.	Question	Answer
Application method	1	If I cannot register on e-Rad by the application deadline, can I still apply?	<p>The representative organization of the research consortium and the collaborative research institution (if receiving research funding allocation) must be registered with e-Rad. If there is a collaborative research institution that is not registered on e-Rad by the time of application, it is possible to apply for it by adding the research funds for the institution to the representative organization under the e-Rad system.</p> <p>However, if the representative organization has not completed e-Rad registration, the project plan proposal cannot be accepted. In addition, even if the participating collaborative research institution has not yet been registered on e-Rad, you must describe the collaborative research institution in the research system chart and other contents of the project plan in the proposal.</p> <p>In addition, if it is adopted, it is necessary to complete e-Rad registration and correct the registered contents of the project plan by the time the contract is concluded. If it is not registered (corrected), the allocation of research funds to the institution will not be permitted. (Cooperative organizations do not need to be registered with e-Rad, as they do not receive research funds. Travel expenses to conferences, and others can be paid by the representative institution.)</p>
	2	In this public call, while it is said that the application must be through e-Rad, is it possible to apply for e-Rad registration or application for this public call in English?	<p>Researchers belonging to foreign research institutes can also make researchers registration on e-Rad (Cross-Ministerial Research and Development Management System). Please register through e-Rad site. Since there is no description in English on the registration application form in e-Rad site at this moment but only in Japanese, we have prepared Annex 4 (link below) of the application guidelines guiding in English for how to fill it out. https://www.naro.go.jp/laboratory/brain/english/Annex_4.pdf</p> <p>Please note that e-Rad is not operated by BRAIN. For details, please contact the e-Rad help desk (+81-(0)3-6631-0622 (direct), opening hours weekdays 9:00-18:00).</p> <p>In addition, the English application form of the research plan proposal can be downloaded from Annex 5 of the application guidelines (link below). https://www.naro.go.jp/brain/english/Annex_5.docx</p>
Conflict of interest	1	Is it possible for PMs themselves to carry out research?	It is possible for PMs themselves to conduct research. Regarding the effort, please fill in the effort required for the content of the proposal in "1. Project Manager (PM)" in Annex 5 project plan proposal.

	No.	Question	Answer
	2	If there is a conflict of interest between the PM and the researchers participating in the research group, will they be excluded from the implementation system?	<p>Conflicts of interest between PM and researchers belonging to collaborative research institutions will not be excluded from the implementation system just by judging conflicts of interest based on uniform criteria. Appropriately judge whether to participate in consideration of the necessity, rationality, appropriateness, and so on of the relationship.</p> <p>In addition, we may judge that you are an interested party based on other than the content you have described.</p> <p>Having the "interests" are in cases which fall under any of the following 1 to 6.</p> <p>1 The PM and the researcher belonging to the collaborative research institution belong to the same department (department of school, research field, and others) of the same private company, the same university or the same national research institute, and others.</p> <p>2 If the PM has a kinship relationship with the researcher belonging to the collaborative research institution.</p> <p>3 If the PM is in direct competition with the researcher belonging to the collaborative research institution.</p> <p>4 If the PM has a close joint research relationship with the researcher belonging to the collaborative research institution.</p> <p>5 If the PM has a close teacher-student relationship or a direct employment relationship with the researcher belonging to the collaborative research institution.</p> <p>6 Other cases where the Director of BRAIN deems it inappropriate for making a fair judgment.</p>
	3	If I am a researcher in the same institution as the PD, can I apply for PM? Is there any problem with participating in a research group, even if it is not an application for PM?	<p>Even if you are a researcher of the same affiliated institution as the PD, you can apply for this public call. In addition, it is possible to participate as a member of a research group for a subject proposed by someone other than yourself. When screening the research plan proposals, we guarantee fairness by having adopted a system in which members of the council who are deemed to be interested parties or who may cause misunderstandings are excluded from the review of the proposals.</p>
Selection of PM	1	While it is stated that proposals in which many young researchers (40 years old or younger) join are subject to additional points in the screening process, more than how many people will become a case for adding points?	<p>This project promotes the active participation of young researchers under the age of 40. For this reason, in "11. Participation of young researchers" in Annex 5 project plan proposal, we ask you to enter the number of young researchers under the age of 40.</p> <p>In addition, we cannot answer how many people will become a case for adding points, as it will affect the screening.</p>
Brushing up of R and D projects	1	Will the adopted PM be paid for the activities during the R&D project elaboration period? What will happen to the PM's activity expenses after the concluding commissioned contract?	<p>For the representative organization to which the PM belongs, during the R&D project period, up to 2 months before the start date of the commissioned period (if the date of submission of the commissioned test and research implementation plan is within 2 months from the date of notification of adoption, the date of notification of adoption) can be traced back, and even before the date of conclusion of the contract, expenses related to research and development that occur after the start date of the commissioned period can be recorded as research expenses. In this case, if conditions are attached to the notification of adoption, it is assumed that the research meets these conditions, and if a contract is not concluded, the commissioned institution will be responsible for the costs.</p>

	No.	Question	Answer
	2	If the research group that was envisioned at the time of the proposal changes due to the elaboration of research plan, shall it take time to establish the consortium, or not?	Assuming that the composition of the research group may change due to the refinement of the proposed project, please apply after considering counter measures in advance.
	3	What were the main points at the time of brushing up regarding this public call?	The following items are described at the bottom of p.22 of the explanatory material. In addition, please refer to the Challenging R&D Policy (p.5) and the Application Guidelines, and others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirmation and coordination of goals, scenarios, plans, systems, research funds, and others for food loss (including food waste) reduction - Confirmation and coordination of participation of private companies such as food companies, strengthening of cooperation, and commercialization support - Coordination related to developmental succession (sharing of metadata, and so on) of previous projects related to “food consumption” - Responding to cross-cutting issues (intellectual property, data management, international collaboration, ELSI, mathematical sciences, and others) - Other issues
	4	Is collaboration with private companies essential?	Participation of private companies is a mandatory requirement for this public call for proposals in aiming at the prompt social implementation of the results of each research project to achieve the 2050 goals of MS5. If a private company is not included in the proposed research plan, or if it is not considered an appropriate collaboration even if it is included, towards the proposed achievement of the social implementation, we ask the collaboration with private companies deemed appropriate in the form of the participation into a consortium member as a collaborative research institution, and the participation is necessary to become definite before the contract is concluded. If necessary, the secretariat of Goal 5 (BRAIN) will support the consultation for the collaboration.
Promotion of R and D after PM adoption	1	Is it possible to change the representative organization to which the PM belongs?	The representative institution to which the PM belongs cannot be changed during the screening period after the application has been submitted. Further, if there is a special change in the circumstances of the research institutes that make up the research group after the PM is selected and before the contract is concluded, and if it is judged that it is difficult to conduct the research, as long as the requirements for the representative institution (the requirements described in 3-(3) of the application guidelines) are met and the PM can continue activities without hindrance, it is possible to change the representative organization if the approval of the PD can be obtained.
	2	Is it possible to change the PM?	PMs are required to manage each R&D project under their own direction and take responsibility for the entire project. For this reason, proposals to replace the PM midway through the project period will not be considered to meet the application requirements this time.

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Data management	1	What to do about data management?	<p>The PM's mission is to formulate a data management plan (DMP) that defines the scope of data to be obtained by the relevant project (data subject to management), and so on, and based on this, supervise all researchers in the consortium to properly store and manage (share, open to public, and so on) the data subject to management.</p> <p>After that, the PM will instruct all researchers of each Consortium to create a catalog of these data subject to management (metadata). The PM will collect and confirm (instruct for supplement and correction as necessary) it and submit the final metadata of the project to BRAIN. In addition, towards publishing this metadata, uploading it to the dedicated site (GakuNinRDM) of the National Institute of Informatics (NII) or the Integrated Database of NARO is required.</p> <p>Each researcher's affiliated institution is responsible for strictly storing and managing the data subject to management, and in accordance with the content described in the above metadata, sharing it within the consortium and disclosing it to the public. If the data subject to management is scheduled to publish, each researcher can freely set their own preferences, such as setting a grace period for publication until the publication of paper or intellectual property is completed.</p> <p>For more details, please refer to the Annex 10 of the application guideline "Basic Policy for Data Management in the Moonshot R&D Project of BRAIN."</p>
Others	1	Can I make a proposal with the same content as the one I am applying for in another research budget?	It is possible to suggest. However, it is prohibited to appropriate multiple public funds to the same content, so if you are adopted for multiple public calls, you will be asked to keep one and decline the others. When making a proposal for multiple public calls in parallel, please fill in (1) "Research and development with public funds currently being implemented or applied for" of Form 3-2 "Achievement of research and development, and others" of Annex 5 Project Plan Proposal.
	2	Is it applicable to handle applications and screenings in English?	It is also possible to correspond a series of proposals and screening in English, such as writing proposals in English and conducting presentations during interviews in English. Provided, please note that if there are Japanese and English texts in the application guidelines, annexes, appendices, explanatory materials, Q&A, and others, the Japanese text shall be official, and the English translation is provisional for reference purpose.
	3	Where can I obtain the "Implementation Guidelines for Commissioned Business and Research -Administrative Processing-?"	<p>Please refer to the homepage of BRAIN. URL: http://www.naro.affrc.go.jp/laboratory/brain/contents/common_form/index.html</p> <p>This "Implementation Guidelines for Commissioned Business and Research -Administrative Processing-" contains common items regarding administrative processes related to contracts, accounting, and intellectual property rights in the research support projects implemented by BRAIN.</p> <p>Please note that if there are separate provisions stipulated in the "Moonshot Research and Development Project for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries implementation guidelines," those provisions shall take precedence.</p>