

“Moonshot Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries R&D Program” public call for project manager – Q&As

Content	No.	Question	Answer
General Remarks	1	May I talk directly to the Program Director (PD)?	Please refrain from consulting or contacting the PD directly, including to discuss the content of this public call, proposal, and examination.
	2	What is the closing date for consulting about this public call?	To make inquiries related to this public call, please use the following email address until the application deadline. Depending on the content and time of your question, it may be difficult to answer; therefore, please contact us well in advance. Currently, because of the risk of COVID-19, we are working from home. For this reason, we are currently not contactable by telephone, so please contact us via e-mail only. We will inform you on HP when it is possible to make contact via telephone (which will depend on the infection status of COVID-19).  E-mail: seiken-moonshot[at]ml.affrc.go.jp Please Replace[at]with @.  【Regarding this public call】 Strategic research development division MS R&D Program Coordinator  【Regarding the contract procedure】 Research management division
	3	Is it possible to have a face-to-face individual consultation with BRAIN?	We will use a web conferencing system (Skype for Business) for individual consultations concerning this public call. Where this system is not available, you can consult with us by telephone. However, please understand that there will be restrictions to the level of contact because we are currently working from home. Depending on the content of the consultation, we may respond by e-mail. Please also note that there is a possibility that we will be unable to answer parts of your questions depending on their content (in the interest of fairness during the selection process). Anyone who wishes to conduct an individual consultation session is asked to notify us using the above e-mail address by noon of Monday July 6th (Japan Standard Time). Thereafter, individual consultations will be held until Monday July 13th. We will inform you on HP when it is possible to conduct a direct face-to-face consultation (the timing of which will depend on the infection status of COVID-19).  Please include the following content when you apply for an individual consultation. The subject of the e-mail: “Request for individual consultation: Moonshot Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research and Development Program (Affiliation / Name)” The body of e-mail: include the following information. •Name •Affiliation •Summary of consultation •Date and time for an individual consultation, and preferred dates for consultation (please include multiple desired dates, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and other holidays in Japan)
	4	It says on the application guideline that both a project manager (PM) candidate and a project plan proposal are required to describe on. Will both PM and a project plan be adopted?	In this public call, only the PM will be adopted. After adoption, the PM will refine the project under the direction of the PD and improve the project plan proposal, etc.

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Project Period	1	Is it possible to implement the project within 10 years?	The period of implementation (starting from 2020) is generally considered to be a minimum of five years and a maximum of ten years. Therefore, it is possible to implement the project within 10 years. Please note that the project may be modified (accelerated or decelerated) or terminated, depending on the results of the evaluation.
	2	How many years is the commission agreement period? If the project is terminated by the evaluation, will the commission agreement be terminated?	A commission agreement will be established directly between the representative organization to which the PM belongs and BRAIN. Please note that the project may be modified (accelerated or decelerated) or terminated, depending on the results of the evaluation.

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Budget and Project Sizes	1	How large is the annual budget?	The budget for the program will be 5.1 billion yen for the first five years after the research begins. Since the upper and lower limits of the budget per project plan are not set, please add the budget required for the project. Please note that we may ask you to change the implementation plan, including the budget and research implementation system, as an incidental condition at the time of adoption.
	2	How many PMs are you planning to adopt?	We have not set a specific number, but we plan to adopt multiple PMs within the scope of the current fund.
	3	The program period would be maximum ten years, however, the budget for the program would be 5.1 billion yen for the first five years of the research beginning. Is the budget secured from the 6th year on?	The budget is undecided from the 6th year onwards.

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Application Requirements etc.	1	It says on the application guideline that Applicants must propose a project to be carried out in a research group consisting of multiple research institutes, but How many institutes of the research group should I configure? Also, Is participation of private companies essential?	We have not set specific numbers, but please ensure you involve the institutions required to carry out the project. The participation of private companies is not essential, but we request that the applicant establishes a project plan proposal taking exit strategies into account.
	2	Is it possible to include non-research institution in the research group?	Since this project is a research and development program, it is assumed, in principle, that research institutions will directly implement research and development projects. However, if you would like to involve other necessary institutions to achieve the Moonshot Goal, please include your reasons and justifications for involving said institutions on Form 2-3 "Role of Research Institute" in Exhibit 5 "Project Plan Proposal."
	3	It is said that the applicant and the organization to which the applicant belongs apply, should the PM candidate be the applicant? Is it possible to apply if a PM candidate's institution change is planned?	The PM candidate must be the applicant and must apply using the research institute to which they belong as the representative organization. Furthermore, the representative organization cannot be changed during the examination period. After the adoption of the PM or before the establishment of the commission agreement, if it is determined that the research is difficult to conduct due to changes or special circumstances in the research group before the end of the contract, it will be possible, with approval by the PD, to change the representative organization as long as it satisfies the requirements for a representative organization (Requirements described in (3) of 3 of the Application Guidelines) and the PM satisfies the conditions required to continue their activities without any difficulties. If, at the time of application, a change is planned to the institution to which the PM candidate belongs, please include the reason for the change, its timing, and information related to the research institute on Form 2-3 "Role of Research Institute" of the project plan proposal of Exhibit 5.
	4	Is it possible to apply even if PM candidate does not have Japanese nationality?	Applicants can be of any nationality, but they must be based in Japan after being appointed as a PM.
	5	If the institution to which the PM candidate belongs is a foreign company, is it possible to apply?	It is necessary that the PM have the legal right to live in Japan, and they must have their base of operations in Japan.
	6	How much PM effort does it need?	There is no numerical criterion for the effort required, but there must be sufficient effort for the PM to effectively fulfill the role. Please note that the effort required could possibly be adjusted through consultation with the PD after adoption.
	7	In the application guideline, "The financial status of the research institutes constituting a Research Group must be stable. If the financial situation is determined to be extremely unstable, the R&D institution may be removed from the Research Group." What kind of the situation does that indicate?	The financial status of each research institute is to be entered in 4 "Information about the representative institute and joint research institutes" of Form 3 "Project plan details" in Exhibit 5."The financial status of the applicant (research group) will be determined based on the content. For example, if all items are negative for 3 years, we may determine that the financial situation is unstable.

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Application Requirements etc.	8	Is it required or allowed to include foreign companies and research institutes in the project proposal as joint research institutes and/or collaborators?	It is not necessarily required. However, the Moonshot R&D Program aims to achieve the Moonshot Goals by bringing together wisdom from across the world under the direction of top researchers. From this perspective, making a proposal that includes foreign companies and research institutes in the project is encouraged.
	9	What is the difference between the three methods to organize a research consortium i.e. regulation method, agreement method and joint research method?	In the regulation method, the representative organization and all the joint research institutes that constitute the research group prepare the terms of the research consortium, and each member of the research group signs the consortium participation agreement. Appendices 4-8 of the Project Manager Application Guidelines include templates for the terms of the research consortium, and Appendix 9 includes a template for the consortium participation agreement. In the agreement method, the representative organization and all the joint research institutes sign the agreement on the terms of the research consortium. Please refer to Appendix 10 of the guidelines for the relevant template. In the joint research method, the agreement on joint research is concluded between the representative organization and each of the joint research institutes constituting the research group. No template is provided in this case.

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Commission Expenses	1	How much the ratio of the indirect expense to the direct expense for each organization?	An amount equal to a maximum of 10%-30% of the total amount of direct expenses can be included as the ratio of indirect expenses. The ratio varies with each research institute as follows: 15% for universities (an additional amount up to 15% is also accepted when the indirect expenses are allocated to laboratories participating in the project); 15% for public research institutes such as national and local governmental research institutes and incorporated administrative agencies, and for organizations with a public aspect to their research such as public service corporations; 10% for private companies excluding small-to-medium enterprises; 20% for small-to-medium enterprises and technology research associations.
	2	Are expenses for subcontracting research or outsourcing of business supported by the project fund?	Subcontracting research to any organization outside the research consortium is not permitted. Outsourcing business, except for research, can be covered by miscellaneous service costs. For example, it is probable that, in development of application software for the project, the research consortium will decide the specifications of the application software while a company outside the research consortium completes associated work that is not research-related, e.g., coding of the software. In this case, the cost for outsourcing the work will be covered by the project fund. However, if the work outsourced to an additional company includes research, the outsourcing will be regarded as subcontracting the contracted project, which is prohibited. In this case, the additional company must be included, before the work begins, in the research consortium as one of the joint research institutes.
	3	Are the costs for improving/modifying existing facilities covered by the project fund?	The commission expenses cover the costs for improving or modifying existing instruments and facilities if they can be considered as prototypes for the research required for the commissioned project. However, special attention must be given to asset value and the remaining useful life of the asset when the improvement or modification of existing instruments or facilities includes repair or extends their useful life.
	4	Which organization is the project fund allocated to if the proposed project is accepted and is contracted?	BRAIN delivers the project fund to the representative organization, which then allocates the fund to the joint research institutes according to the rules of the research consortium. Where a research management administrative body is established, it would deliver the project fund on behalf of the representative organization.

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How to Apply	1	Is the proposal not accepted when the registration to e-Rad is not completed by the application deadline?	The representative organization and the PM candidate must complete the e-Rad registration by the application deadline. However, joint research institutes and the researchers from these institutes who will participate in the project are allowed to complete the registration within the time taken to complete the contract of the accepted project. However, where this case, the joint research institutes must be explicitly included in the proposal and the R&D expenses required for those institutes must be added to the expenses for the representative organization when the proposal is submitted. After the proposed project is accepted, the joint research institutes and their researchers are required to complete the registration to e-Rad and modify the details of the registered project plan accordingly. Allocation of the project fund to any joint research institute that has not completed the e-Rad registration and modified the project plan is not permitted. However, registration to e-Rad is not required for collaborators because they are not allocated the project fund. The representative organization can, however, pay the travel expenses of collaborators that attend project meetings.

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Handling of Conflicts of Interest	1	Can the PM also act as a performer in the R&D project?	It is possible for the PM to conduct research in the project. Please fill in the associated efforts required for the proposed content in the Project Plan Proposal Form 1-1, 3 "PM Information."
	2	In case there is an interest between the PM and the researchers participating in the research group, are they excluded from the implementation framework?	Conflicts of interest between PMs and researchers belonging to joint research institutes will not exclude them from the implementation framework based on uniform criteria of interests. Note that parties not listed in the form may also be considered as stakeholders. Parties falling under any of the following categories from ① to ⑥ are considered to be stakeholders: ① Those who belong to the same department (faculty, research area, etc.) as PMs and researchers belonging to joint research institutes in the same private company, university, national R&D corporation, or other research institutes. 12 ② Those who have kinship ties with PMs and researchers belonging to joint research institutes. ③ Those who are in a direct competitive relationship with PMs and researchers belonging to joint research institutes. ④ Those who are in a close collaborative relationship with PMs and researchers belonging to joint research institutes. ⑤ Those who are in a close mentoring relationship or direct employment relationship with PMs and researchers belonging to joint research institutes. ⑥ Any other cases where the relationship is inappropriate by the director in making a fair judgment.

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Selection of PMs	1	It is said that the proposal including on the participation of many young researcher (under 40) is subject to additional points, how many people need participate in the research group to get additional points?	In this project, the proactive participation of a junior researcher (under 40) is being promoted. For this reason, please state the number of such researchers who are scheduled to participate in Form 6 of the Project Plan Proposal in Exhibit 5. Please note that we cannot provide you with the criteria for additional points, as this would affect the examination procedure.

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Refinement of R&D Project	1	Will the adopted PMs be paid for the activities during refining the R&D project? Will the PM activity costs be after the commission agreement?	The representative organization to which PMs belong may backdate the start date of the commission period to a maximum of three months during the period of the R&D project (or the date of the notification of selection if the commissioned experiment and research plan is submitted within three months of the date on which the application result is communicated), and R&D expenses incurred after the start date of the commission period can be recorded as research expenses before the date on which the agreement is established. Note that in this case, if the offer of the position of PM is conditional, the research must meet the conditions specified, and if the research does not result in the establishment of an agreement, the contract institution will be responsible for its own expenses.
	2	If the research group assumed at the time of the proposal was changed due to refining the project, it may take time to establish the consortium.	Under the instruction of the PD, the adopted PM will be expected to review (and substantiate) the contents of the project proposed at the time of application, including scenarios required to reach Moonshot Goals, project plans, joint research and cooperating institutions (addition or deletion of), and research expenses. Given that this work is important to the implementation of the project, please anticipate this period and be prepared to establish the consortium before applying.

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Promotion of R&D after adoption of PM	1	Is it possible to change the representative organization to which the PM belongs ?	It will not be possible to change the representative organization to which the PM belongs during the screening period. After the adoption of the PM or before the establishment of the commission agreement, if the research is difficult to conduct due to the changes or special circumstances at the research group before the completion of the contract, the PM's institution can be changed with the approval of the PD as long as the new institution satisfies the requirements for a representative organization (Requirements described in (3) of 3 of the Application Guidelines) and the PM continues to satisfy the conditions required to continue their role without any difficulties. In addition, the representative organization can be changed with the approval of the PD if PM changes organizations for personnel reasons, as long as the new institution satisfies the requirements for a representative organization and the PM continues to satisfy the conditions required to continue their role without any difficulties.
	2	Is it possible to change PM during the R&D project ?	The PM is responsible for managing each R&D project under their control and must take overall responsibility for the project. Therefore, the PM will be dismissed if a situation arises whereby the application requirements are no longer satisfied during the period in which the R&D project is implemented. Furthermore, BRAIN does not assume that the PM will change during the R&D project. If this situation were to arise, BRAIN would consider how to deal with it, including perhaps by discontinuing the R&D project, at the time.

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Data Management	1	What am I expected to do for data management ?	The PM is required to establish a data management plan (DMP) that defines the scope of data to be managed in the research and other areas. In addition, based on the DMP, the PM will be expected to collect metadata from the researchers involved in the R&D project and submit them to BRAIN. Moreover, the PM is responsible for storing, sharing, and publishing managed data to the extent necessary using the research data infrastructure system and other resources. Note that these details must be discussed with and approved by BRAIN in advance.

Content	No.	Question	Answer
Other	1	Is it possible to propose the same content as other projects that are currently public calls/during screening (including the Moonshot R&D system)?	It is possible to apply for similar projects. However, it is prohibited to allocate multiple public funds to the same content; if you apply for multiple public calls, please choose only one and decline the others. If you wish to make proposals for multiple public calls in parallel, please describe this in (1) "R&D from public funding that is actually being implemented or under application" on Form 3-2 "R&D results, etc." in Exhibit 5 "Project Plan Proposal."
	2	Can I apply and be examined in English ?	You can go through the entire examination process (preparing the proposal documents, giving the presentation during the interview examination, etc.) in English.