

# French Indian call for joint research and innovation project proposals in "Green Hydrogen Innovations for Sustainable Energy Solutions." 2025 edition

Jointly opened by the French National Research Agency (ANR) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India

## IMPORTANT

The evaluation of Indo-French project proposals is carried out by the ANR and the DST according to the procedures defined below, in addition to the specific procedures for each organization, which are available on their respective websites.

Before submitting research project proposals, it is imperative to carefully read the entire call for proposals text, the specific terms and conditions, and the financial regulations of the two organizations.

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## 1. CONTEXT AND CALL FOR PROPOSALS OBJECTIVES

To catalyze a stronger and rejuvenated Indo-French scientific partnership, the French National Research Agency (ANR) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India are launching the 1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals dedicated to hydrogen, as it was agreed upon at a second meeting of the Indo-French Joint Committee of Science and Technology (JCST) which took place in Delhi NCR on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of this call is to consolidate Indo-French research networks in hydrogen and create new ones. Through bilateral funding, both organizations seek to fund innovative binational projects that demonstrate strong synergy between the teams in each country and real integration of joint work, i.e. effective cooperation between the Indo-French partners. Partners will work together as a joint team with complementary competencies in one common project, creating a joint output.

The French side (ANR) will allocate a maximum of 1 million EUR, and the Indian side (DST) will allocate 90 million INR to support at least 2-4 joint research and innovation projects. The financial requirements should align with the project's goals and the number of applicants involved.

Each funding agency will cover expenditures for their respective country's teams according to its own rules. Details can be found in the underlying call text in the "Funding Regulations" section (§ 6). As far as possible, the project starts, and end dates should be the same for the French and Indian partners. The projects will be funded for **up to three years**<sup>2</sup>.

As both countries intend to encourage researchers' mobility and knowledge exchange between France and India, consortia are asked to include concepts for integrated collaboration between partners from both countries and cross-border networking (e.g. regular meetings of participating work groups, common workshops, exchange of personnel between research organizations, joint publications, visas, medical insurance<sup>3</sup> etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> [Press Release: 2nd Indo-French JCST - French Institute in India](#)

<sup>2</sup> If PhD students are involved in the project, funding could be extended to 4 years.

<sup>3</sup> DST norms, applicable to the Indian partners.

## 2. RESEARCH AREAS

The target of this Indo-French call is to enhance value creation through research and innovation for the development of new technologies, solutions, services, and business models on the following two topics, along with subtopics that can contribute:

1. Innovations for electrochemical hydrogen production or fuel-cells, e.g.
  - Alternatives to rare and costly electro-catalyzers for electrolyzers or fuel cells
  - Bio-inspired catalyst design for green hydrogen production
  - Natural enzyme-based hydrogen production
2. Research on hydrogen carriers and storage, e.g.
  - Chemical hydrogen carriers like ammonia (advances in the chain, such as synthesis/ cracking processes)
  - Liquid hydrogen carriers like Liquid Organic Hydrogen Carriers (LOHC)
  - Materials-based hydrogen storage like hydrides

Even if at the early stages of research, all projects must consider issues of safety, deployment conditions and life cycle (impact on the environment, use of resources available in limited quantities, etc.). In addition to the technological developments, applicants are invited to consider socio-economic issues if relevant to their research topic.

## 3. PROJECTS PROPOSALS SUBMISSION

The French and Indian partners must prepare a joint scientific project proposal.

**The project must be submitted in parallel to the respective funding organizations using different submission templates.**

The joint project proposal provided to each organization **must be identical** in scientific content with identical acronyms and titles.

Teams from each country must each appoint a national scientific coordinator for ANR and a PI/Co-PI for DST<sup>4</sup>.

A full project proposal includes the scientific document, CVs, and all the information required to be submitted online on the respective submission platforms of the ANR and the DST:

- French partners:

Project proposals must be submitted before May 6<sup>th</sup> 2025, 5:00 pm (CET) on the following platform:

[https://aap.agencerecherche.fr/\\_layouts/15/SIM/Pages/SIMNouveauProjet.aspx?idAAP=2260](https://aap.agencerecherche.fr/_layouts/15/SIM/Pages/SIMNouveauProjet.aspx?idAAP=2260)

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<sup>4</sup> Principal Investigator on the Indian side is the equivalent of scientific coordinator on the ANR's side.

- Indian partners:

Project proposals must be submitted before May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 5:30 pm (IST) on the following platform: [www.onlinedst.gov.in](http://www.onlinedst.gov.in)

### 3.1. SUBMISSION OF FULL PROJECT PROPOSALS TO ANR

The French partner's scientific coordinator **must submit his or her full project proposal (scientific document, CV, information filled in online)** on the ANR submission platform before **May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 5:00 pm (CET)**.

**This submission is mandatory** to participate in the selection process.

The document « *Modalités de participation pour les partenaires sollicitant une aide de l'ANR* » -“*Terms of participation for partners applying for ANR funding*”– details how to submit an application online. It can be downloaded from the current year's call for proposals website page: <https://anr.fr/FrIn-GH2SES> .

### 3.1. SUBMISSION OF FULL PROJECT PROPOSALS TO DST

The Principal Investigator (PI)<sup>5</sup> of the Indian partner **must submit his or her full project proposal (scientific document, CV, online filled-in information)** through **ONLINE MODE ONLY** by Scientists/ Engineers/ Technologists working in universities and other Academic institutions; R&D institutions/ laboratories having adequate infrastructure and facilities to carry out R&D work. The PI(s) should have relevant experience, as evidenced by previous prototype commercialization or development or practical experience in the chosen area/topic with field knowledge. It is advised to include one Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)<sup>6</sup> in the proposal.

On the Indian side, the project proposal could be submitted in the enclosed format through ONLINE MODE ONLY ([www.onlinedst.gov.in](http://www.onlinedst.gov.in)). NO HARD COPY of the project proposal should be submitted.

The funding will be governed by the Climate, Energy, and Sustainable Technology (CEST) Division, Department of Science and Technology, funding guidelines.

Please ensure that the following documents and the proposal have been completed and uploaded.

- i. Certificate from the investigator (in the enclosed format).
- ii. Endorsement from the Head of the institution on Letter Head (in the enclosed format).
- iii. A signed certificate for the Conflict of Interest (in the enclosed format)

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<sup>5</sup> PI is the equivalent of scientific coordinator on the ANR side.

<sup>6</sup> Co-PI is the 2<sup>nd</sup> lead of the project from the same institute as the PI.

#### iv. Biodata of PI/Co-PI

Applications received without the above documents and with incomplete information will not be entertained. Soft copies in PDF format must also be emailed to [ranjith.krishnapai@gov.in](mailto:ranjith.krishnapai@gov.in) and [sapana.kaushik@nic.in](mailto:sapana.kaushik@nic.in) on or before **May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (05:30 pm)**.

**This submission is mandatory** to participate in the selection process.

### 3.2. SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENT

The French and Indian partners must prepare **a joint scientific project, with identical scientific content, using different submission templates**. A template for submission to the ANR will be provided and the same by the DST.

Teams from each country must each appoint a national scientific coordinator for ANR and a PI/Co-PI for DST.

The project must be submitted in parallel to the respective funding organizations.

- French partners submitting to the ANR:

The scientific document consists of a maximum of 35 pages in A4 format, including a bibliography, diagrams, and footnotes, as well as a description of the requested budget and its scientific justification.

The document must be in PDF format without any protection.

- Indian partners submitting to the DST:

It is essential to comply with the DST's procedures and submission format

## 4. PROJECTS PROPOSALS ELIGIBILITY

**To be eligible, detailed proposals and CVs must comply with all the eligibility conditions, whether common to both funding organizations or specific to each.**

The information entered online (ANR platform) takes precedence over the information in the scientific document if these two sources of information do not tally, including if they are incorrectly filled in or missing.

**No modification of data will be possible, and no document will be accepted after the closing date and time of the call from either of the two organizations.** Data entry is the direct responsibility of the applicants (French scientific coordinator for the ANR platform and Indian French scientific coordinator (PI) for the DST).

Project proposals **may be declared ineligible at any time** during the evaluation process. Proposals that do not meet the eligibility conditions, whether common to both organizations or

specific to each, will not be evaluated a priori and will under no circumstances be eligible for funding.

#### 4.1. JOINT PROJECT PROPOSAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

##### **Completeness of the project proposal:**

The full project proposal must be finalized as requested by both organizations (ANR online on the dedicated submission platform) by the communicated closing date and time.

- French Partners to the ANR:

To be complete, the full project proposal must include the following:

- The scientific document, 35 pages in a PDF file without protection submitted on the ANR's platform;
- The CVs of the scientific coordinators and other main researchers involved in the project, combined in one PDF file without protection, submitted as an annex;
- Online data filled as requested by ANR;

- Indian Partners to the DST:

It is essential to comply with the DST's procedures and submission requests

##### **Composition of the consortium:**

The consortium must include at least one partner eligible for ANR funding and one partner eligible for DST funding.

The participation of companies is strongly encouraged. Companies can participate as co-applicants (eligible for funding) or cooperation partners (non-funded).

On the Indian side, cooperation partners without additional funding are asked to contribute to the project, e.g., by financial, infrastructural, or personal means. In this case, a letter of intent (LOI) describing their contribution to the project is required<sup>7</sup>.

End users or other civil society organizations can participate as additional co-applicants or cooperation partners or as members of an advisory board.

##### **Scientific nature of the full project proposal:**

The full project proposal must relate to the themes expressed in point 2, "Research Areas."

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<sup>7</sup> The LOI is only required on the Indian side. The LOI will be not part of the evaluation process, however, the submission of this document by the PI is mandatory.

## Project proposal duration

The project's planned duration must be the same for both countries' partners.

### 4.2. ANR's ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The ANR verifies the eligibility of project proposals by taking into account the conditions described above (§ 4.1) and explained in the document « *Modalités de participation pour les partenaires sollicitant une aide de l'ANR* » - "*Terms of participation for partners applying for ANR funding*" available on the web page dedicated to this call.

### 4.3. DST's ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

DST verifies the eligibility of project proposals by taking into account the conditions described above (§ 4.1) and reflected in the DST call templates.

Projects leading to the development of a device/prototype/process with **Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)** having potential for commercialization, must start at least at TRL 3.

## 5. PROJECT PROPOSALS EVALUATION AND SELECTION FOR FUNDING

Each full project proposal is evaluated on the basis of the information as completed and submitted online at the closing date and time, in accordance with the evaluation criteria (see § 5.3 'Evaluation criteria'). The evaluation will involve external peer reviewers and panel members. **The scientific panel is joint for both funding organizations.**

### 5.1. REVIEWERS EVALUATION

The aim is for each project proposal to be evaluated by at least two external peer reviewers (individuals who do not take part in the joint scientific panel meetings), who the ANR and the DST call in after checking that there is no conflict of interest. Peer reviewers operate individually and confidentially without any discussion with third parties. Peer reviewers complete an individual assessment report, commenting on each evaluation criterion.

The ANR and the DST will call on them according to their own procedures.

### 5.2. PANEL MEMBERS EVALUATION

**The full project proposals are evaluated by the members of the joint scientific panel** based on the information submitted by the applicants by the closing date and time of the call for proposals and on the peer reviewers' reports. The panel members may put these assessments into perspective because, unlike the reviewers, they have a synoptic view of all the full project proposals.

The scientific panel consists of highly qualified French, Indian, or foreign individuals from the research communities selected according to the submitted full project proposals. Panel members are appointed based on their scientific expertise, and the panel is co-chaired by two chair representatives, one appointed by the ANR and one by the DST

### 5.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

#### Criterion 1: Scientific excellence

- Conformity with the call for proposals aims and degree of conformity with designated research areas
- Scientific and technical quality, innovativeness and knowledge gain of the joint research project
- Methodology and quality of project construction, feasibility and appropriateness of the joint research project (timeline, work packages)

#### Criterion 2: Consortium, Collaboration and Implementation

- Quality, competence and complementarity of the consortia to address the objectives of the project including the eventual active involvement and commitment of companies and organizations; possible contribution to the overall Indo-French cooperation in hydrogen energy research
- Skills, expertise and involvement of the project coordinators from both sides (French – Indian)
- Added value of the bilateral cooperation and expected benefit for both the French and the Indian side and the balance of the cooperation.
- Appropriateness of resources and funding requested

#### Criterion 3: Impact and benefits of the project

- Overall impact of the project, including scientific, technological, economic and social aspects
- Appropriateness of description of how socio-economic questions are incorporated and end users involved, where feasible. Consideration of safety aspects.
- Ambition of the project in terms of targeted TRL

External peer reviewers and panel members use **the same evaluation grid**.

With regard to the sub-criterion “Appropriateness of resources and funding requested” of the Criterion 2 “Consortium, Collaboration and Implementation”, the economic context of the partners’ countries is taken into account. Project coordinators<sup>8</sup> are informed that under the bilateral agreement, the DST will provide Indian partners with a maximum funding of 2.25 crores or approximately 250k€ for a project for the three-year duration of the project. French applicants are invited to submit projects that justify ANR funding for indicative amounts of 200

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<sup>8</sup> Equivalent to PI/Co-PI on the Indian side.

k€ to 350 k€, depending on the project's ambition and the number of partners applying for ANR funding. The maximum amount that can be requested from the ANR to fund a project is set at 500 k€.

#### 5.4. SELECTION AND FUNDING DECISION

Once the peer reviewers have completed their evaluations, the joint scientific panel meets in a plenary session (virtual meeting).

The collective discussion results in ranking the full project proposals in relation to each other. The outcome of the discussion is recorded in a final evaluation report reflecting the consensus reached by the joint scientific panel.

The list of projects selected for funding will be published on the ANR and DST websites around July 2025.

The ANR and the DST will notify the successful applicants individually when the results are published.

### 6. FUNDING REGULATIONS

Each organization funds eligible expenses for its country's teams according to its rules.

- ANR funding regulations:

<https://anr.fr/RE>

- DST funding regulations:

The financial guidelines are outlined in the DST call templates.

### 7. SCHEDULE

**Call for proposals opening date:** March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Deadline for full proposals submission on the ANR's website:** May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 5:00 pm (CET).

**Deadline for full proposals submission on the DST's website:** May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 5:30 pm (IST).

**Joint decision and publication of results:** July 2025 (indicative date)

**Possible projects starting** from September 2025.