

**Notice of the Ministry of Science and Technology on
Application Guidelines for the 1st Batch of Projects for year 2018 under the
Intergovernmental International Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation
Key Project of the National Key R&D Programme¹**

In accordance with the overall arrangements of the Reform of the National S&T Funding Programmes of the State Council (Guo Fa [2014] No. 64) and relevant requirements laid out for the National Key R&D Programmes (NKP), the Application Guidelines for the 1st batch of projects for year 2018 are hereby published under the NKP Intergovernmental International STI Cooperation Key Project. Please organise project applications based on the requirements set out in the Guidelines. Relevant issues are notified as the following.

I. Procedures of project applications

1. Applicants will submit proposals in line with the research directions provided in the Guidelines in the forms of projects. No tasks (or topics) will be established within projects. Proposals should be submitted as projects covering all the indicators provided in the Guidelines. Project application entities should nominate one researcher as Principal Investigator.
2. Evaluation of proposals for NKP projects will be conducted in two stages including pre-applications and formal applications. Detailed procedures are as follows:
 - In line with relevant requirements provided in the Guidelines, applicants shall fill up the pre-application forms via the portal of National S&T Information System. The pre-application within the limit of about 3000 characters should provide detailed explanations on the objectives and indicators of the proposed projects, brief introduction on the innovative ideas, technology roadmaps and research foundation, and attach relevant annexes as requested. Applicant entities should sign joint application agreements with all participating entities with indication on dates of signature. Application entities should sign commitment letters of integrity with Principal Investigators. The duration from the date of guideline publication to the deadline of pre-application submissions shall not be less than 50 days.
 - Recommendation entities should check the project application materials and submit projects at their recommendation timely via the portal of National S&T Information System.
 - At receipt of project pre-applications, China S&T Exchange Centre (CSTEC) will organise administrative checks and first round of review. No defense by Principal Investigators is requested for the first round of review. Based on the review by experts, 3 to 4 times of number of projects to be funded will be selected for the next stage of defense review. Review results should be notified to those applications that fail to enter the next stage review.
 - Applicants notified by CSTEC of defense reviews shall fill up and submit formal applications via the National S&T Information System within the duration of 30 days for submissions of formal applications.

¹ Unofficial translation for reference only, please refer to the website of MOST for call details:
http://www.most.gov.cn/mostinfo/xinxifenlei/fgzc/gfxwj/gfxwj2018/201803/t20180326_138789.htm

- CSTEC will organise administrative checks and defense reviews for formal applications. Principal Investigators of project applications will give defense presentations through web video. Projects will be selected based on the results of expert review taking into account external consultations.

II Recommending entities for applications

1. S&T departments and bureaus of relevant administrations of the State Council;
2. S&T administrations of provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities and cities;
3. Industrial associations transformed from original industrial administrations;
4. Strategic industrial technology innovation alliances of A type listed as pilots by Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), and pilots of S&T service alliances listed by MOST and Ministry of Finance

Recommending entities should propose recommendations within their mandates and should be responsible for the authenticity of the recommended projects. Relevant administrations of the State Council will recommend those entities of their professional affiliates. Industrial associations, strategic industrial technology innovation alliances and pilot alliances of S&T services will recommend their member entities. Provincial S&T administrations recommend entities within their administrative scope. The list of recommending entities is published at the National S&T Information System Public Service Platform.

III Application eligibility requirements

1. Applicant and participant entities should be research institutes, universities and enterprises registered in Chinese mainland with independent legal person status before 31 December 2016, with competent R&D capacities and conditions, solid foundation for international cooperation, and sound operational management. Government agencies cannot apply as applicants. The proposal should be recommended by one recommending entity only and should not be submitted through multiple or duplicate channels.
2. Principal investigators should hold senior professional titles or PhD degrees, born after 1 January 1958, with at least 6 months of working time dedicated to projects.
3. Principal investigators should in principle be the proposers of the main research ideas of the proposed projects and the scientists who lead practical research activities. Civil service staff (including those undertaking S&T programme administration functions) in central and local governments cannot apply for projects.
4. Principal Investigators can only submit for one project. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) under the National Key Basic Research Programme (973 Programme, including Large Science Projects), National High Tech R&D Programme (863 Programme), National S&T Support Programme, National International S&T Cooperation Programme, National Large Science Facility Project, and sectorial non-profit research projects (all referred to as "Programmes prior to reform") as well as National Major S&T Projects and National Key R&D Programmes cannot lead project applications. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (excluding leaders for tasks or topics) under the National Key R&D Programmes cannot participate in project applications either.

The total numbers of projects applied for and ongoing projects undertaken by core project participants under the Programmes prior to reform, National Major S&T Projects or National Key R&D Programmes should not exceed two. Principal Investigators of ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) under the Programmes prior to reform, National Major S&T Projects or National Key R&D Programmes should not withdraw from projects

(including tasks or topics) currently undertaken due to applications for projects under the National Key R&D Programmes.

Ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) with implementation durations (including those renewed) until 31 December 2018 are not covered by the project number limit.

5. Members of Advisory Committee cannot apply for projects. Experts that participated in the formulation of key project implementation plans or application guidelines of the current year cannot apply for the specific key projects.
6. Scientists of foreign nationalities and scientists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan recruited by Chinese mainland entities can be Principal Investigators. Employees under full recruitment conditions should provide effective certificates issued by Chinese mainland employers, while employees under non-full recruitment conditions should provide effective certificates issued by both the Chinese mainland employers and overseas entities, which should be submitted together with project proposals in hard copies.
7. In principle, once project proposals are received, applicant entities and principal investigators cannot be changed.
8. Specific application requirements should be referred to in relevant guidelines.

Applicants can search for information on the ongoing projects (including tasks or topics) undertaken by relevant researchers in the programmes prior to reform, National Major S&T Projects or National Key R&D Programmes via the National S&T Information System Public Services Public Service Platform so as to avoid duplicate applications.

IV Specific application methods

1. Proposals are filled up and submitted online. Applicant entities are requested to submit applications online via the National S&T Information System Public Service Platform. CSTEC will organise administrative checks and project reviews on the basis of the application forms submitted online. Templates of pre-application forms and annexes can be downloaded from the National S&T Information System Public Service Platform.

Online submission of pre-applications will be open from 16 April 2018 08:00 to 15 May 2018 17:00. Applicants that pass first round reviews will fill up formal applications as per request and submit online via the National S&T Information System. Specific timing and relevant requirements will be notified separately.

National S&T Information System Public Service Platform: <http://service.most.gov.cn>

For technical assistance: Tel: 010-51666288; Email: program@istic.ac.cn

2. Recommendation organisation: Recommending entities are requested to send the recommendation letters with official stamps (in two hard copies) and the lists of recommended projects (in two hard copies) to the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China by postal services before 18 May 2018 (date of delivery prevails). List of recommended projects should be printed directly from the system.

Mail address: Room 170, Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China, No. 15 Fuxing Road, Haidian District, Beijing 100038
Tel: 010. 51666288

3. Material delivery and advices: Applicants are required to send pre-application forms with official stamps (in two hard copies) to CSTECH by postal service before 18 May 2018 (date of delivery prevails). Pre-application forms should be printed directly from the system.

Mail address: Room 600, No. 54 Sanlihe Road, Xicheng District, Beijing 100045

Tel: 010-68598010