

Imperial College London – CNRS PhD joint programme – Call for projects: Digital Transformation and Global Challenges

Imperial and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) recognise that collaborative international activities enable cross-border pooling of research capabilities and sharing of expertise and facilities, the opportunity to appreciate different perspectives, outputs that are typically more highly cited, as well as access to new environments for impact and exploitation of research outcomes.

CNRS and Imperial are launching a joint call for collaborative PhD proposals between the two institutions. The theme for this year's call is Digital Transformations and Global Challenges. The call is intended to be open to all areas of science, technology, engineering and medicine. The aim is to develop collaborative PhD projects that can train and network the next generation of researchers and innovators, offering them expertise not available at just one institution, and to also seed Imperial-CNRS collaborations that can lead to EU and other funding opportunities.

This call invites Principal Investigators at CNRS and Imperial to jointly put forward a research project to be underpinned by x1 PhD at CNRS and x1 PhD at Imperial, which includes joint supervision plans and a built-in mobility programme.

Strategic rationale

Imperial College London and CNRS researchers have co-authored almost 2,800 publications in the past 5 years (2015-2019) and worked together on 43 joint Horizon 2020 research consortia.

In addition, Imperial and CNRS have a joint Mathematics Laboratory, IRL *Abraham De Moivre*, Imperial is the UK lead for the CNRS International Research Network in Quantum Fields and Strings, and Imperial and CNRS have recently agreed an International Research Project in Integrative Metabolism.

The €95.5 billion Horizon Europe budget, which runs from 2021-2027, provides continued impetus for joint scientific discovery and innovation.

Call guidelines

Eligibility

- Scientists from Imperial who can supervise PhD students; researchers working in a CNRS unit holding an accreditation to supervise PhD students (HDR)
- A PI cannot submit more than one application in the framework of this call.

There must be one PI from Imperial and one PI from a CNRS laboratory. Those who do not already have a collaborator may consult Imperial's website or the CNRS website to find information on the research groups and projects being carried out in either institution.

Funding

The model is for each collaborative project to have two PhD students and two supervisors, one of each at both Imperial and CNRS.

At CNRS the funding will be for a three-year studentship. Funds will include mobility costs for visits to London for the project over three years.

At Imperial, funding for the three-year studentship must be allocated by departments, faculties, CDTs, DTPs, or other research groups. The central College will use an I3 Research England grant to contribute the equivalent of 25% of the studentship (home fees rate) per each of the projects selected. These funds can be used to pay for 25% of the tuition fees, or as a studentship top-up for other uses, e.g for mobility, consumables, or other related costs to support the project. Given that co-investment is required to apply, Imperial applicants must submit approval to commit a studentship from their Head of Department, director of the CDT, director of the DTP, or director of the research group in question, as part of the application.

Number of awards

Up to five projects are expected to be funded jointly by Imperial & CNRS.

Support period

3 years

Deadline and start dates

Open date: November 22th, 2021

Closing date: January 21st, 2022

Notification date: March 2022

Beginning of the projects: October 2022

Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated and ranked by an Imperial-CNRS committee according to the following criteria:

- Scientific quality & originality of the project
- Scientific merit of the teams
- Synergy between the teams, added value of international cooperation
- Convincing plan for engaging PhD students in the research and for managing joint supervision
- Projects are likely to be sustainable beyond the grant period
- Benefit to researcher based on her/his career stage

The proposals should also include an outlined plan for raising external competitive funding.

How to apply

Imperial applicants should submit in electronic format (Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF) to globalseedfunds@imperial.ac.uk;

CNRS applicants should submit the same file via the dedicated Website: <https://www.cooperation.cnrs.fr>

The joint proposal must consist of the following parts, in one single file (up to 5 pages, not including references – parts I and J):

Imperial-CNRS Joint PhD Project
APPLICATION FORM

This form must be completed using 10pt Arial font. Margins must not be adjusted. Where the form has been adjusted or incorrect font used, the proposal will be returned to the applicant without further assessment.

The joint proposal must consist of the following parts, in one single file (up to 5 pages, not including references – parts G & H):

A. Title Page

Name of Imperial Principal Investigator	Department
Current position <i>(Note that applicants must be permanent members of academic staff)</i>	If you are a member of a College Centre or Network, please provide Centre/Network name here

Name of Imperial Co-investigator (if relevant)	Department
Current position	Institution
<i>(duplicate co-investigator section as necessary)</i>	

Partner details

Name of CNRS Principal Investigator	Laboratory
Current position	Email address
<i>(duplicate CNRS partner section as necessary)</i>	

B. Lay description of the scientific project

Title
Guidance: lay (accessible to the public) description of the scientific project and its contribution to a research area, historical context of application (if applicable), quality and originality of the project, objectives, scientific methodology, expected results and their meaning, future perspectives. Explain the relation between the project and the research themes of the laboratory.

C. Added-value of the international cooperation

Guidance: Describe the added-value of the international cooperation to fulfil the aims of the project (explain why the project cannot be carried out at a national level only). Describe the expected benefits for the UK and French teams. Describe the balance between the contributions of the UK and French teams.

D. Plan for engaging PhD students in the research and for managing joint supervision

Guidance: Describe how PhD students be engaged in the research project. How will joint supervision be managed?

E. Planned activities

Guidance: Describe the planned activities in the framework of the project and provide a timetable. Explain how these activities will help achieve the aims of the project. This part should include explicit lines regarding the planned travel of the PIs & the PhD students to the other country.

F. Sustainability & External Funding

Guidance: Outline the proposed plan for raising external competitive funding.

G. Ethics

Guidance: Does the project raise ethical questions? If yes, please describe them and how they are dealt with.

H. Benefits to researcher based on her/his career stage

Guidance: Please describe how involvement in this collaborative project would benefit you, given your stage of career?

I. Scientific quality of the teams

Guidance: Please attach in annex a list of complete citations of no more than 10 publications related to the project for each team. (This list is not taken into account for the page limit.)

J. Short curriculum vitae of Principal Investigators

Guidance: not taken into account for the page limit

- K. Approval from Head of Department, Director of Programme, or other relevant authorised person**

Guidance: Imperial PIs must provide an email approval from their director, head of department or other relevant authorised person to show support for their application to this programme. At Imperial, as scholarships are usually allocated by departments or other research groups, the PI would need the approval of the HoD, Director of the CDT, or DTP, or relevant research group that has the studentship to confirm that they have approval to utilise 75% of a studentship for the Imperial portion of the project.