



PSF-NSFC Joint Scientific Exchange Program

Call for Proposals (CFP)

July 2025

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Section 1. Acronym List

IP	Intellectual Property
PI	Principal Investigator
R&D	Research and Development
RO	Research Office
HEC	Higher Education Commission



Section 2. Definitions

Grant: Term used to describe the funding instrument used by NSFC/PSF for the execution of material support after signing the Grant Agreement/Master Research Funding Agreement.

Intellectual Property (IP): All intellectual property rights, of any kind or nature throughout the world, whether existing now or in the future, including without limitation the rights with respect to (i) inventions (whether or not patentable and whether or not reduced to practice), designs, patents and patent applications; (ii) trademarks and service marks together with all goodwill associated therewith and worldwide registrations, applications, and renewals related thereto; (iii) copyrights, copyrightable works (in whatever form or medium), and all registrations, applications, and renewals for any of the foregoing; (iv) trade secrets, data, database rights, and confidential information; and (v) all claims, causes of action, and remedies of any kind related to the foregoing.

Principal Investigator (PI): The Principal Investigator who is identified in the research proposal as the leader and manager of the research team in each country and who has the ultimate responsibility for all administrative and programmatic aspects of the proposed project, in addition to their research role.

Co-Principal Investigator (PI): The person designated on the research proposal as a principal individual involved in the scientific development and execution of a project.

Project Incentive Premium (PIP): Payments made by NSFC to principal investigators, researchers, and consultants of the accepted projects, according to the amount determined in the project contract. These payments can only be made to permanent staff of public institutions.

Researcher: The person who carries out scientific research as a part of the project research team.

Research End-User: Any entity (including industry, public bodies, service providers, non-profit organizations) that does not have research and development activities as part of its main mission and that can benefit from the research outcome of the project.

Research Team (RT): It is composed of project members from each country's project.

Submitting Institution (SI): Research institution registered inside Pakistan that is responsible for submitting research proposals to PSF. Once awarded, such an entity will be termed as the Awardee.

PSF Specific Definitions

Awardee: A "Submitting Institution" that is awarded grant(s) from PSF. The awardee must be a party to the Contract Agreement.

Collaborating Institution: Government Institution inside Pakistan collaborating with the submitting institution in conducting the research proposal.

Direct Cost: Expenses related directly to the performance of the project research activities. Direct cost includes the "Personnel" cost, the "Travel" cost, and the "Miscellaneous" cost.

Graduate Student (GS): A student enrolled for a graduate degree in a university and engaged in research that is in direct fulfilment of a requirement for that degree.

Investigator: Anyone responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of funded or proposed research project.

Research Office (RO): A department within the submitting institution responsible for vetting submitted research proposals and administering awarded research projects i.e. ORIC or other administrative institutions.

Signatures and Stamp of the Head of Institute: Administrative procedure required from the Awardee's RO prior to submitting any proposal, reports or requests to PSF, through which the RO confirms the accuracy of submitted information and confirms its compliance with the Awardee's policies and procedures and those of the relevant program/call.

Section 3. Call Snapshot

SCOPE	
Submission opens	10.07.2025 (12pm, Pakistan time)
Submission deadline	03.09.2025
Announcement of results	March 2026
Implementation period	2026-2028
Cooperation program objectives	The aim of the call is to intensify cooperation between Chinese and Pakistani participants in science by means of research mobilization scientific exchange grants.
Specific Research Priority Areas	Green Energy Computer science & Artificial Intelligence
Eligible applicants	<p>PSF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scientific Exchange Programme: At least one Public Sector Pakistani research lab /organization/HEC chartered University (Max. 4 participants)• Joint Seminar/workshop/conference/symposium: Maximum three Public Sector Pakistani research lab /organization/HEC chartered University (Max 3 participants) <p>NSFC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exchange Program: At least one Chinese lab/ university /organization;• Joint Seminar: At least three Chinese lab/ university /organization; <p>* Eligibility criteria for project teams and PIs can be found at Section 7.</p>



Project Budget	For Pakistani side Up to Rs. 3.0 million (for 2 years) for Joint Exchange Programme Up to Rs. 1.5 million (one year) for seminars/conference etc.	For Chinese side Up to 150,000 yuan per proposal
Project duration	2 years (24 months)	
How to apply	For Pakistani side Please submit proposal online through RGMS	For Chinese side Please submit the Chinese proposal online via https://www.nsfc.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab434/info95108.htm
Contact Person	PSF Ms. Zaiban Farooq In-Charge International Linkages Pakistan Science Foundation 1-Constitution Avenue, G-5/2, Islamabad 051-9206724 (Ext. 121) jsep.psf@gmail.com	NSFC Dr. Shengqiang Song Department of International Program National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) Tel: 86 10 6232 6440 Email: songshengqiang@nsfc.gov.cn>



Section 4. Background and Objectives of the Call

PSF and NSFC are jointly launching the Joint Scientific Exchange Program (JSEP) call with the aim of supporting joint scientific exchange/mobility in the areas of Science and Technology. Thus, this call majorly focuses on emerging areas of technologies.

Section 5. Research Priority Areas of this Call

The call's research priority areas are aligned with the national strategies of both countries. We are seeking proposals in the below priority areas:

- Green Energy
- Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence

Section 6. Funding of the Call

6.1. Funding Available

6.1.1.1 As a rule, NSFC academia/public institution partners that are eligible for funding can receive up to 150k yuan of funding per proposal in total.

Pakistani side is eligible for funding of upto Rs. 3.0 million for a period of two years and 1.5 million for one year. The size of the grant may vary depending upon the needs of each project and must be fully justified. PSF-funded costs of each grant will be issued and managed by PSF in accordance with its funding guidelines and procedures.

6.2. Duration of the Project

The duration of the project will be 2 years

Section 7. Eligibility

7.1. Eligibility of Proposal

PSF: **7.1.1** Scientific Exchange Program: At least one Public Sector Pakistani research lab /organization/HEC chartered University (Max. 4 participants)

7.1.2 Joint Seminar/workshop/conference/symposium: Maximum three Public Sector Pakistani research lab /organization/HEC chartered University (Max 3 participants)

NSFC: **7.1.3** Exchange Program: At least one Chinese lab/ university /organization;

7.1.4 Joint Seminar: At least three Chinese lab/ university /organization;

7.2. Eligibility for Chinese Team

- Exchange Program: the Chinese applicant must be the PI or main participant of an ongoing NSFC project (excluding exchange projects) with a duration of 3 years (or more) finalized after.
- Joint Seminar: the Chinese applicant must be the PI or main participant of an ongoing NSFC project (excluding exchange projects) with a duration of 3 years (or more) finalized after; Main participants of an ongoing NSFC project applying for Joint Seminar must have a senior professional or technical position (title) or a doctorate degree, or be recommended by two scientists with senior professional or technical positions (titles) in the same field of research and agreed by the PI of the ongoing NSFC project.

7.3. Eligibility for Pakistan-based Team:

7.3.1 Eligibility of Submitting Institution

7.3.1.1 Regular full time faculty members of HEC recognized universities and full time/regular employees of government owned organizations are eligible to apply.

7.3.1.2

7.3.2 Eligibility of Principal Investigators (PIs)

7.3.2.1 The PI must be from regular full time faculty members of HEC recognized universities and full time/regular employees of government owned organizations working inside Pakistan.

Section 8. Submission Process

The following table shows important dates for the call.

Timeline For JSEP Call	
Description	Dates
Open proposal submission to PSF and NSFC	10.07.2025
Close proposal submission to PSF and NSFC	03.09.2025
Awards announcement	March 2026
Anticipated starting date	April 2026

Section 9. Online Submission Procedures

Each PI will submit the joint application form to their respective funding agencies.

The Chinese-based PI needs to submit the joint application to NSFC through <https://www.nsf.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab434/info95108.htm>

The Pakistan team will email the soft copy of the proposal through RGMS before the closing date.

To complete the application process, PSF and NSFC might need supporting documents.

9.1. The supporting documents for Chinese applicants are available at <https://www.nsf.gov.cn/>

9.2. The Pakistan-based PI is required to provide the below:

9.2.1 The PI may indicate persons they would prefer not to review the proposal and should indicate why. The decision to follow the suggestions or not, however, remains with PSF.

9.2.2 During the “Proposal Preparation,” the PI has to submit the information according to the online sections listed below as well as upload documents as required. The PI must ensure to enter and upload the same information submitted by the Chinese PI to NSFC submission system.



9.2.2.1 Proposal Summary: This should be the same as the proposal abstract/summary used in the application form.

9.2.2.2 Submitting Institution's Information: A research institution registered inside Pakistan that has appropriate research resources specialized in areas and is responsible for submitting research proposals to PSF. The PI's institution in Pakistan will be considered as the submitting institution and will be responsible for vetting the proposal.

9.2.2.3 Collaborative Institutions' Information: Institutions inside Pakistan, collaborating with the submitting institution in conducting the research proposal. If collaborative institutions are involved in the proposal, the PI should enter the required information for each institution. Collaborative Institution must include at least one Co-PI.

9.2.2.4 Chinese Collaborator: Insert the information about the Chinese PI and Co-PI(s).

9.2.2.5 Ethical Compliance: For research involving human subject(s), stem cells in human subject(s), research with laboratory animals, DNA research and biohazards materials, the PI is required to comply with the regulations and policies set out by the government of Pakistan.

9.2.2.6 Miscellaneous Documents: This section may contain any supporting documents such as tables, appendices, etc. Documents wrongly uploaded under this section will not be considered. All the information required for the evaluation process should be included in the Research Plan.

9.2.2.7 Declarations: The PI should declare electronically that the proposal is their own work and is not plagiarized.

Section 10. Proposal Screening

All submitted proposals are subject to screening for the Pakistan based team by PSF according to the screening process.

All submitted proposals are subject to screening for the Chinese team by NSFC according to their national rules.

Section 11. Proposal Evaluation

At the national level, each partner organisation evaluates submitted proposals based on its internal rules and regulations. Only projects eligible for both sides, NSFC and PSF, will go forward for assessment. NSFC and PSF will evaluate the project proposals according to their scientific evaluation criteria. Both organizations will exchange their scientific evaluation results, and only the overlapping projects that are found acceptable for both parties will be funded.

Section 12. Research Ethics and Regulatory Requirements

12.1. Pakistani team has to comply with the Research Ethics and Regulatory Requirements outlined by the Government of Pakistan.

12.2. For the Chinese team, please refer to the Ethics Committee Approval Document, Official Permission Document and Research and Publication Ethics Committee Regulation.

Section 13. Intellectual Property Policy

As the JSEP call will be carried out by multiple project partners, the basis of collaboration between the project partners, including ownership of intellectual property (IP) generated during the project and rights to exploitation, and IP management is expected to be set out in an Intellectual Property Management Agreement between the PIs involved. It is the responsibility of the PIs to put such an agreement in place and to be provided when requested by funding agencies. The terms of collaboration must not conflict with the funding agencies terms and conditions and national law.

Section 14. Inquiries

For any inquiry regarding Chinese team and the electronic proposal submission process, please send an email to, songshengqiang@nsfc.gov.cn

For any inquiry regarding the Pakistani-based team, please drop an email on jsep.psf@gmail.com

