

12th Call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects

CALL TEXT AND GUIDELINES

1. Background

SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects is a bilateral programme established between the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) and the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan (MOST) in order to cooperate on research projects of common interest. Its objective is to encourage exchange and cooperation between researchers, engineers and research institutions in Slovakia and Taiwan.

The programme is based on the Addendum to the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the National Science Council, Republic of China (later succeeded by MOST) signed on 15 and 21 May 2009.

Subject to mutual agreement of SAS and MOST, a call for bilateral project proposals is launched and evaluated every year in parallel by the both research funding organisations (RFOs). In 2020 the programme continues with the 12th Call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects for the years 2021–2023.

2. Aim of the Call

The aim of the Call is to support bilateral projects in basic or applied research proposed jointly by researchers from SAS and from R&D institutions in Taiwan. It is envisaged that the projects will establish collaborations that should facilitate subsequent joint applications in other European and international funding schemes.

A bottom-up approach is applied to this Call, i.e. the Call is open to researchers from all research fields, topics are chosen freely by applicants.

Both RFOs would like to particularly encourage proposals for projects in social sciences and humanities.

3. Application

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

Terms and conditions of participation in the Call are determined for each partner by legal and internal rules and regulations of their respective RFO.

Eligible Slovak applicants are individuals and research teams from SAS organizations. The principal investigator (PI) must be a senior researcher and must have, at the time of submission, a full-time employment contract with an SAS organisation (or several part-time contracts with multiple SAS organisations summing up at least to one full-time employment

equivalent) valid for the whole duration of the project. Each member of the Slovak core research team must also have an employment contract or a fellowship with the same or another SAS organisation.

Individuals involved in preparation of the Call, in the evaluation process or in the funding decision process are eligible neither as PIs nor as team members.

Since 2018 Taiwanese PIs are eligible if they have an already running MOST research project, to which they can add the SAS-MOST project as an “add-on” grant. Check MOST [website](#) for further guidance.

The duration of the bilateral projects is **minimum 12** and **maximum 36 months**. Expected start of the projects is **1 January 2021**.

3.2. Funding model and the Call budget

The Call's funding model follows the principle that each RFO will fund that part of a bilateral project which is within its country, i.e. SAS will fund the SAS research team and MOST will fund the Taiwanese research team.

Budget that can be requested by SAS applicants in the 12th Call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects is **up to 40,000 EUR per project per year, of which 15,000 EUR per project per year is an in-kind contribution of the applicant's organisation.**

If the budget is lower, the ratio between the SAS contribution and the organisation's in-kind contribution must be maintained.

It is expected that 2 projects will be funded within this Call.

3.3. Eligible costs

Project funding is regulated by SAS Financial Rules for awarding grants for research projects ([Finančné pravidlá na udeľovanie grantov SAV na medzinárodné výskumné projekty](#)). The document includes detailed information on eligible costs and applicants should read it thoroughly to ensure compliance. (Rules set out in this document apply to that part of a project budget which is actually requested of SAS, i.e. excluding the in-kind contribution of the applicant's organisation.)

3.4. Proposal Submission

Project proposals have to be developed in close collaboration with partners from Taiwan. The Slovak partner submits a proposal to SAS and the partner from Taiwan to MOST based on parallel calls. A valid application consists of required materials submitted by both sides of the bilateral collaboration to their respective RFO.

The SAS proposal submission consists of:

- an application form
- a project proposal form
- a letter of commitment to in-kind contribution signed by the applicant's organisation

The application form must be signed by the applicant (PI) and the statutory representative of the applicant's organisation and must include the organisation's stamp.

The Call opens on 1 April 2020. All documents are to be submitted by 31 May 2020 (postmark date) in hard copy to

Úrad Slovenskej akadémie vied
Odbor medzinárodnej spolupráce
Mgr. Zuzana Černáková, PhD.
Štefánikova 49
81438 Bratislava

and electronically to

E-mail: cernakova@up.upsav.sk

4. Evaluation process

Proposals that pass the eligibility check will be evaluated on SAS and MOST sides according to the RFO's internal procedures. The Slovak procedure is regulated by [The Statute of SAS Committee for Evaluation of International Projects](#) (K-VMP). It consists of 2 phases.

4.1. External expert review

SAS applicants are requested to nominate 2-3 experts whose expertise is within the area of the project topic and who are not in a conflict of interest with the applicant to enlarge the pool of potential evaluators.

The following **evaluation criteria** will be used, scoring from 0 to 5, with a maximum of 50 points:

- 1) Scientific and technological excellence
 - a) Clarity and relevance of the objectives
 - b) Soundness, coherence and credibility of the concept and methodology
 - c) Level of innovativeness (methodological/conceptual/theoretical contribution to the related scientific and technological area) and potential of the project results for application and exploitation in different areas (short-term and long-term impacts, identification of relevant stakeholders, effectiveness of dissemination measures)
 - d) Competence and expertise of the applicants in the relevant field(s)
- 2) Quality of implementation
 - a) Feasibility and effectiveness of the work plan, including project completeness, reasonable time-scope balance, availability of necessary infrastructure, reasonable allocation of tasks and responsibilities and appropriate team composition

- b) Appropriateness of management structures (PI's previous experience or demonstrated aptitude to manage an international project, internal communication measures, risk management)
 - c) Budget cost-effectiveness and adequacy of financial resource distribution in view of planned activities
- 3) International cooperation
- a) Demonstrated added value of the bilateral cooperation and involvement of both partners of the bilateral cooperation
 - b) Benefit for SAS in terms of exchange of expertise through visits, training of researchers by the foreign partner, involvement of young researchers etc.
 - c) Capacity for lasting collaboration (plans for joint exploitation of results, further research projects, trainings and other types of collaboration or contacts beyond the project lifetime).

4.2. Evaluation by SAS Committee for Evaluation of International Projects (K-VMP)

Applicants whose proposals are evaluated above a 70% threshold by the external experts will be invited to present their projects at a meeting of the committee. The committee will summarize evaluation results in a written protocol, specifying reasons for recommending or rejecting individual proposals. Based on these results, the committee will draw up a ranking list.

5. Funding decision

Positive national evaluation of the proposal does not guarantee an award of a grant. The final selection of projects recommended for funding will take place at a joint SAS-MOST meeting and will consider results of both the Slovak and the Taiwanese evaluation processes. Funding of the selected projects is then subject to approval of SAS and MOST authorities. Concerned Slovak PIs will be asked to submit an 'MVTs form' to the Department of International Cooperation of the SAS Office and may be requested to present the project at SAS Presidium's meeting.

A contract for the bilateral grant project may be concluded and funds may be transferred only if both RFOs award the grant. Project PIs will be informed about the funding decision by a notification letter from their respective RFO.

6. Reporting requirements

SAS defines responsibilities of PIs of funded projects in the present Call Text and the following documents:

- SAS Financial Rules for awarding grants for research projects ([Finančné pravidlá na udeľovanie grantov SAV na medzinárodné výskumné projekty](#))
- Breakdown of allocated budget (rozpisový list) sent to the awardee organisations for every year of the project implementation

PIs must submit an **annual progress report** consisting of a scientific and a financial part by **31 January** each year at the latest (Správa o vecnom riešení úlohy MVTs a Čerpanie finančných prostriedkov na podporu úlohy MVTs). Continuation of funding will be decided on the basis of this monitoring and is subject to the consent of both RFOs.

7. Indicative Call timeline

Pre-announcement	10 February 2020
Publication of the 12th Call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects	1 April 2020
Deadline for applications	31 May 2020
Eligibility check	1 – 15 June 2020
Exchange of the evaluation results	15 October 2020
Joint SAS-MOST meeting (Recommendation for funding)	21 – 23 October 2020
Final approval of results by SAS and MOST authorities	12 November 2020
Start of the projects	1 January 2021

8. National contacts

SAS	Ms Zuzana Černáková Tel.: +421 2 5751 0 118 E-mail: cernakova@up.upsav.sk
MOST	Ms. Vivien Lee Tel: +886-2-2737-7150 Email: vvlee@most.gov.tw