

13th 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 both research funding organisations. In 2021 the programme continues with the **13th call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects for the years 2022–2024**.

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 funded 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 research funding organisations 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 project partner by legal and internal rules and regulations of their respective research funding organisations.

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

equivalent) valid for the whole duration of the project. Each member of their 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, the evaluation process or 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 information on eligibility criteria and application procedures applicable to the Taiwanese partner.

The duration of bilateral projects is **minimum 12** and **maximum 36 months**. The expected start date is **1 January 2022**.

3.2. Funding model and budget

The Call’s funding model follows the principle that each research funding organisation will fund its country’s part of a bilateral project, i.e. SAS will fund the SAS research team and MOST will fund the research team from Taiwan.

Funding available to the SAS applicants in the 13th call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects is **up to 40,000 EUR per project per year** in accordance with the SAS Presidium’s resolution no. 1121 (12. 11. 2020), **of which 15,000 EUR per project per year is an in-kind contribution of the applicant’s organisation**.

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

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

3.3. Eligible costs

Project funding is regulated by the SAS Financial Rules for awarding grants for research projects ([Finančné pravidlá na udeľovanie grantov SAV na medzinárodné výskumné projekty](#)) including detailed information on eligible costs. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read this document carefully and to contact their national contact point before submission in order to ensure compliance.**

3.4. Proposal submission

Project proposals have to be developed in close collaboration with partners from Taiwan. Application is valid only if required materials are submitted by both partners to their respective research funding organisations.

Materials to be submitted to SAS are:

- 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 25 February 2021. **All documents are to be submitted by 10 May 2021** in the **PDF format via e-mail** to cernakova@up.upsav.sk.

Signed and stamped signature pages of the documents must be scanned and attached to the e-mail submission.

4. Evaluation process

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

4.1. External expert review

In the first phase, proposals will be reviewed by external evaluators. SAS applicants are requested to nominate at least 2 experts, one from Slovakia and one from abroad, 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 and subcriteria** 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 the SAS Committee for Evaluation of International Projects

Applicants who score at least 70% overall and 50% in each of the three criteria in the external evaluation will be invited to present their projects at a meeting of the SAS Committee for Evaluation of International Projects. The committee will discuss the proposed projects and draw up the final ranking list.

5. Funding decision

Positive national evaluation of a 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 the approval of SAS and MOST authorities. The PIs of the selected projects will be informed about the recommendation for funding and invited by SAS to submit an 'MVTs form' as a basis for the SAS Presidium's decision.

6. Reporting requirements

The Slovak PI of a funded project must submit an **annual progress report** consisting of a scientific and a financial part by **31 January** each year at the latest. Continuation of funding will be decided on the basis of this monitoring and is subject to the consent of both research funding organisations.

The Slovak PI must also submit a **final report** within 1 month from the end of the project.

In any **publication of results** of the research for which funding was awarded, a mention must be made of the support received from the 13th Call for SAS-MOST Joint Research Projects.

7. Indicative Call timeline

13th Call launch	25 February 2021
Application deadline	10 May 2021
Exchange of the evaluation results between SAS and MOST (Recommendation for funding)	October/November 2021
Results announcement	November/December 2021
Start of the projects	1 January 2022

8. National contact points

SAS	Ms Zuzana Černáková Tel.: +421 2 5751 0 118 E-mail: cernakova@up.upsav.sk
MOST	Ms Jennifer Hu Tel: +886-2-2737-7560 Email: jenu@most.gov.tw