



# Announcement

## 12<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals for Joint Research and Development (R&D) Projects between Germany and France

**Project applications and national funding applications will be accepted until 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**

### 1. Scope

Bpifrance and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) intend to support joint French-German research and development projects (R&D projects) in order to develop innovative products, processes, or technical services in all technological and application areas.

Funding will be available for R&D projects in which new products, technical services or processes with a high market potential are developed and subsequently transformed into marketable products. In Germany, funding is provided through the Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM). In France, funding is provided through the Bpifrance Aide à l'Innovation funding scheme.

Bpifrance and AiF Projekt GmbH, ZIM project management agency on behalf of the BMWK, will assist the French and German project partners with basic information during the submission of project proposals, in the evaluation and in the implementation phase.

### 2. Call Structure

The call invites partners to present joint proposals for R&D projects until 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 according to the following procedures used by Bpifrance and ZIM, specified on the Bpifrance website (France) and the ZIM guideline (Germany).

## 2.1 Financing

Eligible project participants from Germany and France will finance their costs from their respective national funding schemes applicable for this call set by Bpifrance and the German ZIM funding programme, and complementarily from their own resources. Provision of funding from one funding agency will neither indicate that funding from the other funding agency will be provided, nor bind the other national scheme in its provision of funds to the eligible project participants.

## 2.2 Minimum Requirements

Project results will have to contribute to the development of commercial products, processes and / or technical services which are based on the international state of the art.

The project proposals have to comply with the following guidelines:

- The partners must include at least one company from France and one small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) from Germany, which are independent from each other and provide substantial R&D contributions to the project.
- Research and technology organisations (RTO) and other (large) companies are welcome as additional partners or subcontractors according to each country's funding schemes.
- Companies and/or RTOs from other countries may also participate. These partners' participation is neither funded by Bpifrance nor ZIM. They have to be included into the Proposal Application Form.
- The project must focus on the development of new products, technical services or processes which generate solutions with a high market and commercialisation potential.
- The project should have an obvious advantage and differentiated value proposition resulting from the cooperation between the participants from the two countries (e.g. increased innovation capability, access to R&D infrastructure, new fields of application, etc.).
- Project duration should in principal not exceed three years.
- The project should demonstrate a balanced technological contribution by the participants from both countries and must be equally significant to all participants.
  - In a project with two cooperating partners, no partner may contribute more than 70% of total person months to the project.
  - In a project with more than two cooperating partners, no partner may contribute more than 50% of total person months.
  - All RTOs involved in the consortium may altogether not contribute more than 50% of the total person months.

Any partner whose cooperative R&D project is consistent with the aforesaid criteria may apply to the present announcement in accordance with the national laws, rules, regulations and procedures in effect.

### 3. Submission

Between the opening of the call on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025 and the call deadline on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 the project consortium must submit the joint Proposal Application Form (in English), filled out and signed by all organisations participating in the project. This document must to be submitted electronically to [zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de](mailto:zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de) and [international.innoproject@bpifrance.fr](mailto:international.innoproject@bpifrance.fr)

The Proposal Application Form as well as additional country-specific information are available at [www.zim.de/Frankreich](http://www.zim.de/Frankreich) and at [Appels à projets et concours | Bpifrance](#).

**In addition to the Proposal Application Form, project partners who want to apply for funding within this call must submit a national application according to the respective national rules (see below).**

A Consortium Agreement that regulates the terms of cooperation between all partners (in English) is to be drafted (but not yet signed!) between the German and French consortium members.

In case of a positive funding decision,

- the French project partners must provide Bpifrance with a copy of the draft **before** signing it and once again after signing it in order to obtain funding;
- the German project partners must confirm the existence of a Consortium Agreement to AiF Projekt GmbH within three months after the announcement of the positive funding decision.

The minimum requirements for the Consortium Agreement are:

- Naming of all project partners
- Description of the project aims, scope, role division and differentiation of the subprojects of the partners including their work plans with person months (alternatively the joint Proposal Application Form can be declared as part of the agreement)
- A clause that provides for all partners to be informed if third parties are involved in the project
- Regulation of intellectual property rights (background and foreground)
- Basic regulation of joint commercialization and apportioning of benefits

- Joint final reporting is to be done according to the regulations set by ZIM and Bpifrance
- If research organisations from Germany are involved, a passage has to be included that allows them to publish their own results without duty to obtain consent from the other partners.

The Consortium Agreement shall be consistent with Bpifrance's and ZIM's terms and conditions for funding.

### 3.1. France

In order to check their eligibility for national funding, French participants must contact their Bpifrance *chargé d'affaires innovation*, cc [international.innoproject@bpifrance.fr](mailto:international.innoproject@bpifrance.fr), **prior** to applying. Then, each French partner must submit their national funding application on Bpifrance En Ligne platform before **3 December** with all mandatory appendices included. The short project title used in the Proposal Application Form with their German partners must be provided. The Bpifrance en Ligne account will be opened with the help of the *chargé d'affaires innovation*.

- Eligible Beneficiaries: French companies up to 2,000 fulltime equivalents (FTEs)
- Eligible costs: Industrial research and experimental development (industrialization and commercialization costs are not eligible)
- Funding: Financial support may be provided to eligible French companies in support of industrial research or technological development activities. Eligible French partners can be funded through an ADI (Aide pour le Développement de l'Innovation), which usually takes the form of a reimbursable advance or a subsidized rate R&D loan of up to 3M€ within the limit of own equity.

NB: If the company is considered as a Deeptech company, the funding could be different.

In any case, all the above information regarding French funding could be adapted to the company's profile and project.

Before the application, the French partner can apply to a [Diagnostic Partenariat Tech International](#), if they plan on working with an external expert to help them build their consortium, project or application. The Diagnostic is a grant covering up to 50% of the expert's consultancy services (see limit depending whether the company is the consortium leader) and planning on helping companies structuring their international collaborative project.

French partners may also participate in a collaborative project on a self-funding basis. There is no direct funding for French universities nor research institutions (self-funded or subcontractors). Large companies with more than 2,000 FTEs are not eligible for public funding.

**Any payment is subject to a signed consortium agreement.**

### 3.2 Germany

Each German project partner submits an individual ZIM application to the responsible ZIM Project Management Agency. Every German SME, in accordance with the relevant EU regulations, as well as medium-sized companies with less than 500 employees (full-time equivalents), which carry out R&D for the development of innovative products, processes or technical services, are eligible to apply. Other medium-sized companies with less than 1,000 employees are eligible to apply for funding if they cooperate with at least one German SME (in accordance with EU regulations) whose project is funded. Research and technology organisations (RTOs) are eligible to apply as cooperation partners of eligible companies.

Detailed criteria for submitting applications and the ZIM application form can be found on the ZIM website ([www.zim.de](http://www.zim.de)); you may also contact AiF Project GmbH directly as described below. The application must be written in German and comply with the regulations of the ZIM guideline.

### 3.3 Decision

Both French and German partners whose projects have been selected for funding will be informed of the results and the amount of funding by their respective funding agencies 4 to 5 months after project submission.

## Contact

The national funding organisations Bpifrance (France) and AiF Projekt GmbH (ZIM project management agency in Germany) will be available to provide all interested parties with all relevant information. All applicants are advised to consult with their respective national funding agencies at an early stage.



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