

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. General Information for International Personal Exchange Program (IPEP)

This program is a joint funding initiative of the National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS) in Japan and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

The program is administered by NINS in Japan and the DAAD Bonn Office in Germany. Applicants in Japan will submit their application to NINS. Before submitting an application, applicants from NINS must confirm that their corresponding counterparts in German universities, higher education institutions and research institutions will also submit a corresponding application to DAAD. The program seeks cooperative relationship in the research contents between Japan and Germany, thus in developing the research plan. There must be a shared common understanding among the applicants in both countries.

Funding may be granted in general for travel cost and accommodation cost with auxiliary costs necessary for conducting the program, which should be less than 10% of the total budget of the program. The DAAD and NINS have agreed to invest an annual budget up to approximately € 40.000 each, for generally up to three new projects adopted each year. Funding from the German side is supported by the Federal Foreign Office, the foreign ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The period of possible dispatch of participants under the project is from April 2026 to March 2028- on both the NINS side and the German side.

These guidelines apply to NINS applicants only. German applicants are asked to refer to the guidelines as set up by DAAD's call for applications.

2. Objectives

The program aims to foster long-term cooperation between research institutions of NINS and German universities, higher education institutions and research institutions through the provision of funding for the exchange of individuals and groups. The objective is to strengthen existing partnerships and to initiate new partnerships or similar cooperation. The academic exchanges from any field of the natural sciences, including early-career researchers and junior scholars, who are part of the cooperation, are eligible to apply for funding.

3. Eligibility

The program is open to scholars/ researchers/ research groups in the natural sciences for joint research with German partners. Projects comprising the exchange of students still pursuing doctoral degrees studies and scientists who obtained their PhD degrees no longer than 5 years ago are preferred.

Project members on the Japanese side may include researchers affiliated with NINS as well as from other universities/ research institutions collaborating with NINS. However, the principal applicant of the project must be from NINS. Applicants in Japan and Germany are asked to submit corresponding applications and a research summary in English after mutual negotiation. Funds from NINS support the academic exchange costs for the project members

on the Japanese side as follows. The exchange costs for project members on the German side should be supported by German funding.

- professors/ researchers/ scholars who wish to conduct German universities, higher education institutions and research institutions
- young researchers (PhD students/ postdoctoral researchers)

4. Application

The funding of exchanges in this project requires the cooperating partners on both sides to submit parallel applications to their institutions (NINS and DAAD).

When developing the research plan, it is important to note that the programs proposed in both Japan and Germany must be consistent with regards to the research contents. Application documents should be written in English. In order to ensure that they share a common understanding, it is requested that one-page abstract of the program in English should be submitted to both NINS and DAAD by applicants in both countries, respectively. The following application documents are requested to be submitted to NINS:

1. Application forms for the NINS – DAAD International Personal Exchange Program
 - Information Sheet (in English)
 - Research Proposal (in English)
2. One-page abstract of the program (in English)

For the documents of the German side, please refer to the guidelines of the DAAD.

5. Assessment Criteria (used in Evaluation process)

The application will be assessed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- evaluation of the research plan from the academic point of view
- added value of the project for long-term bilateral cooperation
- necessity for the participation of the chosen partners
- convincing exchange and visiting plan of the participating members
- appropriateness of the financial request in terms of the number and the duration of visits
- balance of involvement of advanced and younger academics (students still pursuing their doctoral degree and scientists who earned their PhDs no longer than 5 years ago)
- relevance for education of young academics
- mutual recognition of higher education qualifications

6. Funding

Funding may be granted according to the quality of the project for up to 2 years based on the application submitted in the first year. In the first year, a maximum of 1,800,000 yen will be granted in Japan. In the subsequent year, a maximum of 1,200,000 yen will be granted in Japan. Funding provided each year must be spent within the corresponding year and the funding for the first year cannot be passed to the second year.

Funding may be granted for travel cost and accommodation cost based on the NINS standard for these costs. However, auxiliary costs necessary for conducting the program can be included, which should be less than 10% of the total two years budget of the program. Salaries cannot be funded.

7. Application Process

Applications must be submitted at first to the research institutions in NINS by the principal applicant who is in charge of the research partnership, its contents and budget. Applications then will be submitted to NINS office shown below after obtaining the approval of the director-general of the institute. The principal applicant is limited to a full-time research staff member of NINS.

Liaison and International Affairs Section (nins-kokusai@nins.jp)

Deadline for submission of applications for fiscal year 2026 is September 16, 2025. Funding will start on April 1, 2026 for both NINS in Japan and DAAD in Germany.

For further information, please contact the NINS Liaison and International Affairs Section.
(For German applicants: contact Mr. Denis Bolcek, DAAD at bolcek@daad.de)

8. Reports

A research report and an expense report of the project should be submitted annually by the end of April of each year.

The reports will be reviewed by NINS and DAAD to confirm whether the goals of the programme have been met.