

NSERC–National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) call for proposals on quantum technologies

[Description](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[Funding](#)

[Application](#)

[Review](#)

[Award](#)

[Post-award requirements](#)

[Results](#)

[Regulations, policies and guidelines](#)

[Resources](#)

Description

Research subject

Program type

Research partnerships

International stream

[Yes]

Summary

A joint initiative between Canada and the Republic of Korea to support quantum technology research.

Description

This is a joint initiative between the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF).

This funding opportunity will support bilateral research projects on quantum science and technologies to strengthen collaboration between Canadian and Korean academic researchers. Through a lead agency model, the Korean project lead will submit a single collaborative proposal on behalf of the Canadian and Korean research teams. The proposal will undergo a merit review process by the NRF, the lead agency. The Canadian project lead must submit a simplified application to NSERC on behalf of the Canadian research team.

Research objective

Quantum science is the study, manipulation and control of systems at the atomic and subatomic levels. Quantum technologies are at the leading edge of science and innovation, both in Canada and worldwide. They will support the growth and transformation of key sectors, enable new economic opportunities, revolutionize defence and security and help advance a range of benefits for society.

This funding opportunity aims to leverage the complementary interests and research expertise of Canadian and Korean academic researchers to support bilateral research projects in quantum science and technologies.

Proposals may address any challenge in quantum science, but their thrust must aim to advance research in any of the following areas of quantum technologies, or a combination thereof:

- quantum algorithms/encryption, including post-quantum cryptography

- quantum communications
- quantum computing
- quantum materials
- quantum sensing

Proposals may also couple any of these quantum technology thrusts to other research topics in the natural sciences and engineering.

Proposals that do not address one or more of the quantum technology areas listed will not be considered. To identify challenges, gaps and opportunities related to quantum technologies from a Canadian perspective, Canadian applicants should consult the [quantum missions](#) and [roadmaps](#) developed in close consultation with Canada's quantum community. Korean applicants are encouraged to consult Korea's [National Quantum Strategy](#).

Across the research and training areas in scope for this call, there are opportunities to explore how quantum technologies can enhance the privacy, security and defence of the participating countries. Grants will support non-confidential, unclassified university-based research on quantum technologies, which may include research on technologies with dual-use applications. Grants cannot support secret or classified research.

Canada's quantum investments are guided by the [National Quantum Strategy](#) (NQS) and the [Defence Industrial Strategy](#). Korea's quantum investments are guided by the Comprehensive Plan for Quantum Science and Technology, announced by the Korean Ministry of Science and ICT in late January 2026.

Eligibility

Who can apply

[Researcher]

Eligible institutions

[University]

Eligibility

If you are a Canadian university researcher [eligible](#) to receive NSERC funds, you can apply independently or as a team with co-applicants who are also [eligible](#) academic researchers.

You may participate as the NSERC principal applicant (i.e., the Canadian project lead in the Korean application) on only one application; however, you may participate as a co-applicant or collaborator on multiple applications. Adjunct professors whose primary place of employment is

in Canada while outside the university sector (e.g., government, industry or not-for-profit) may apply as co-applicants. College faculty can participate as co-applicants.

Your project must include at least one collaborator based at a Korean academic research organisation eligible to receive funding from the NRF.

NSERC will internally review the eligibility of Canadian researchers and the NRF will assess the eligibility of Korean researchers.

Eligibility for partnership

For this collaborative call for proposals, non-academic collaborators and partner organizations are not permitted.

Funding

Value and duration

Each funding agency will provide funding to its national researchers, subject to its national rules and budgetary availability. Canadian applicants are only eligible to receive funding from NSERC and Korean researchers are only eligible for funding from the NRF. Please refer to the [NRF web page](#) for information on funding for Korean researchers.

The NSERC budget for the call is up to \$3M. NSERC expects to fund four projects, each with a duration of three years. NSERC will provide up to \$750,000 per project (\$250,000 per year) to support the research of eligible Canadian applicants. The estimated number of awards and anticipated funding levels are subject to the availability of funds.

Eligible expenses

Canadian expenses

All Canadian expenditures are subject to the principles and directives governing the appropriate use of grant funds outlined in the [Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration](#). The funds from NSERC must be paid to eligible Canadian universities and cannot be used to buy equipment, products or services from, or on behalf of, any collaborating organization.

You can only include NSERC-eligible direct costs of research in the Canadian project budget, such as:

- salary support for research trainees (undergraduates, graduates and postdoctoral researchers) to perform research and related training
- salary support for technicians and research professional personnel
- materials and supplies

- activities that support collaborations and knowledge mobilization related to the project
- activities to develop and grow the research collaborations with your Korean collaborator(s)

You can also include the costs of equipment, provided that the equipment is:

- essential to achieving the objectives of the research project
- incremental to the equipment already available at the university or to your Korean collaborator(s)
- within a total expected equipment cost that does not exceed 30% of the total Canadian grant budget

Project management costs may be an eligible expense, up to 10% of the total direct research costs (see the [Guidelines for research partnerships programs project management expenses](#)). The need for project management expenses must be explained in the Budget justification section.

Application

How to apply

The Korean project lead is responsible for submitting the full application package, including the collaborative Korea–Canada research proposal, to the NRF in accordance with its instructions. The deadline for submitting the full application package to the NRF is October 7, 2026, before 6:00 pm (KST). Please refer to the [NRF web page](#) for submission instructions.

In parallel, the Canadian principal applicant must submit a simplified application through [NSERC's online system](#) by **October 7, 2026, before 8:00 pm (ET)**. Note that institutions may set an earlier internal deadline for applicants to submit their application in the system so that the research grants office can finalize the submission to NSERC by the official deadline. Applicants should contact their research grants office to confirm the internal deadline for submitting their application. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

All documents in the application should follow [NSERC's online presentation and attachment standards](#). NSERC will screen all applications to ensure they are complete and adhere to the program requirements and objectives. If your application does not meet all program requirements, it will be rejected.

To start your application:

- Log in to [NSERC's online system](#) and choose Create a new Form 101

- Select Research partnerships programs, then Alliance Grants
- For the Proposal type field, select Letter of intent (Note: This funding call has no letter of intent stage, but selecting this option will create the simplified application template)
- For the Type of call field, select **International-Collaboration-NRF-Quantum** from the drop-down menu
- Follow the [instructions for completing a grant application](#) specific to this call for proposals

A complete application must include:

1. An application for a grant (Form 101)
2. A completed [personal data form with CCV attachment](#) (Form 100A) for the Canadian principal applicant and each Canadian co-applicant
3. A biographical sketch or CV for each Korean collaborator and each Canadian collaborator (maximum two pages if written in English or 2.4 pages if written in French)
4. A budget and justification for the research costs planned in Canada
5. In accordance with the [Tri-agency guidance on the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern \(STRAC Policy\)](#), applications submitted under this funding opportunity are considered to aim to advance a [sensitive technology research area](#). Therefore, you, your co-applicant(s) and your collaborator(s) must each complete the [STRAC Attestation form](#).

By submitting your application, you and any co-applicant(s) agree to the [terms and conditions of applying for applicants](#). Your Korean collaborator(s) will agree to the NRF's terms and conditions.

For submissions under this call, you agree that information in your application will be shared between NSERC and the NRF for purposes consistent with the program objectives. The information you provide in your application is collected under the authority of the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Act](#). NSERC is subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#). The information you provide is stored in a series of NSERC data banks as described in [Information about programs and information holdings](#). You must ensure that others listed in the application have agreed to be included. Korean collaborators are responsible for ensuring they are aware of NRF rules concerning the disclosure of information in the application and any relevant policies.

Application deadline

Submission of full application to NRF: October 7, 2026, before 6:00 pm (KST)

Submission of simplified application to NSERC: October 7, 2026, before 8:00 pm (ET)

Consult with your institution's research office to confirm internal deadlines for submitting your application.

Application link

[link]

Review

Review process

NSERC will conduct an administrative review of the simplified NSERC application to ensure that it is complete and complies with all requirements. NSERC will verify that the Canadian researchers have an active and appropriate role in the collaborative research and confirm their eligibility at the start of the evaluation process. Applications that are incomplete or do not meet all program requirements will be rejected.

Merit evaluation criteria

The full collaborative Korea–Canada proposal will undergo merit review by the NRF, the lead agency, according to its processes and assessment criteria:

- Scientific relevance, originality and topicality
- Suitability of methods and feasibility
- Applicants' scientific track record and expertise
- Collaborative research

NSERC will not conduct a parallel merit review. The NRF will provide NSERC with the merit review results.

Funding decisions

NSERC and the NRF will jointly determine funding recommendation outcomes and fund selected projects to support the activities of eligible researchers in their respective countries.

Award

Award information

NSERC's funding will be awarded as an Alliance grant and be administered by the Canadian principal applicant's institution. NSERC's funding is intended to support the activities of eligible

Canadian researchers and must be used in accordance with the [Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration](#).

The NRF will inform your Korean collaborator(s) of their award information.

Payment

Your award letter will indicate the start date of your project. NSERC will normally transfer your grant funds to your university within 30 days of that start date. NSERC and the NRF intend to coordinate award timing where possible. However, because each funder may have different funding cycles, it is possible that some projects will have different start and end dates.

Notification of results

If your application is approved for funding by NSERC, you will receive an award letter and must adhere to its terms and conditions.

The NRF will inform your Korean collaborator(s) of their terms and conditions.

Post-award requirements

Acknowledging NSERC

You must acknowledge NSERC and any other participating funder support in any communications or presentations about your research supported by this initiative.

Reporting progress

You must report regularly on how you use the funds from your grant, the activities you carry out during your funded project, and the project's outcomes. You will be informed of reporting requirements upon receiving your award letter. For NSERC, you must provide a final report within three months of the end of your project.

The NRF will communicate reporting requirements to your Korean collaborator(s).

Notifying NSERC about changes

Subsequent instalments of your grant depend on (1) a demonstrated need for NSERC funds and (2) adherence to all other conditions specified in the terms and conditions of an award.

You must notify NSERC of any changes to the Canadian research team or if any of your Korean collaborators leave the project. In this case, you should discuss with NSERC the impact on your ability to achieve the project's original goals and whether the project may need to be amended or terminated.

If you fail to provide the requested feedback, your subsequent applications or instalments may be denied.

The NRF will communicate change notification requirements to your Korean collaborator(s).

Extension of grants

Following the initial period of your grant, NSERC will automatically extend your grant for one year to allow you to complete your planned activities. No additional funding is provided for this automatic one-year extension. If you cannot complete your planned research activities within the specified term of your grant, you must notify NSERC. You may be permitted an additional year to complete your project using existing funds. In this case, your Korean collaborator(s) must notify the NRF.

The NRF will communicate its rules about extensions to your Korean collaborator(s).

Results

[awards list when available]

Regulations, policies and guidelines

Regulations, policies and guidelines

Research agreements and intellectual property

NSERC recommends that you and your university follow best practices by signing a research agreement that defines the intellectual property rights and obligations of all organizations involved in your research project. The agreement must be aligned with [NSERC's Policy on Intellectual Property](#), which promotes the use and/or exploitation of knowledge and open access to results of research funded by NSERC.

Note:

- NSERC claims no rights of ownership to any intellectual property generated by Alliance International grant projects.
- NSERC's Policy on Intellectual Property stipulates that each of your students must maintain their right to defend their thesis without delays or impediments.
- All participants, including any trainees, should consult this policy to ensure that they are aware of their rights and obligations.

Research security

To ensure the Canadian research ecosystem is as open as possible and as secure as necessary, the Government of Canada has provided clear information on research security considerations for the development, evaluation and funding of grant applications.

For more information on the granting agencies' implementation of harmonized research security measures, as well as further guidance and resources on how to safeguard your research, please refer to the [Tri-agency guidance on research security](#).

Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC Policy)

The [STRAC Policy](#) addresses risks related to research that advances [sensitive technology research areas](#) performed with research organizations and institutions that pose the highest risk to Canada's national security. The STRAC Policy applies to this funding opportunity.

Applicants must identify whether their proposed research aims to advance a [sensitive technology research area](#). If so, the submission of [attestation forms](#) will be required from [researchers with named roles in the grant application](#) (see the list of named roles specific to this funding opportunity) to certify that they are not currently affiliated with, nor are in receipt of funding or in-kind support from, a [named research organization](#).

The [Tri-agency guidance on the STRAC Policy](#) provides more information on applicable procedures and requirements, including the [responsibilities of researchers](#) and the [responsibilities of institutions](#).

Equity, diversity and inclusion

NSERC supports excellent, innovative, and impactful research that advances knowledge and understanding and responds to local, national and global challenges. NSERC recognizes that equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles are foundational to research quality and impact. It is essential to recognize and remove systemic barriers that limit the full participation of all individuals and communities, and to integrate EDI considerations in all aspects of research. These principles are integral to the [Tri-agency statement on EDI](#) and the [Tri-agency EDI Action Plan](#). For more information, consult the [NSERC EDI web page](#).

Resources

Resources

[Link to NRF official announcement]

[Link to webinar]

Contact

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