

International call for projects

"Connect Talent"

2017 edition - specifications

1. Context and objectives of the international call for projects "Connect Talent" 2017

In March 2013, the Pays de la Loire Region launched its first international call for projects "Connect Talent", aimed at detecting, finalizing and supporting "breakthrough projects" in the fields of scientific research, higher education and innovation. A second edition was held in 2015.

For its 2017 edition, the international call for projects "Connect talent" still targets breakthrough projects, that has the aim and potential to meet one or more of the major scientific or technological challenges of our time, inside one discipline or in a transdisciplinary logic; an innovative project whose societal and economic impacts in the medium and long term are indisputable; a daring project capable of significantly accelerating the march of progress in our region, winning it scientific and academic recognition and enhancing its reputation and attractiveness on a worldwide level.

Unlike in previous years, the 2017 edition focuses on international scientific leaders, and is aimed at international scientific leaders, working alone or with a team in order to kick-start a new research programme or accelerate the development of existing programme.

As regards scientific branches, submitted projects will strengthen key abilities for the future of the territory in major fields such as those identified in integrated projects in research, training and innovation.

Strategic issues and strengthening of key abilities will be given priority, and in particular those falling within the "Industry of the Future" theme. Projects related to one of the twelve integrated projects research - training - innovation (RFI) will also be examined carefully.

2. The call for projects process and evaluation of applicants

2.1. The calendar for the call for projects

The Connect Talent international call for projects is open to three successive waves of submissions, the deadlines for which are, respectively: April 2017, September 2017 and February 2018.

Applications should be sent by e-mail and mail to the Région des Pays de la Loire (aap.recherche@paysdelaloire.fr) and a copy should be sent to the local authorities (conurbations of Angers, Le Mans and Nantes)

2.2. The process of analysing and selecting applicant files

It will be organized in accordance with the 4 following stages, which will be repeated for the 2nd and 3rd waves of the call:

Stage 1: An analysis of the "receivability" of the applicant file in terms of respecting the specifications for the call and the format of the applicant file.

Stage 2: An in-depth analysis of the projects in accordance with 3 criteria – the quality and ambition of the project, added value and impact, feasibility – with the help of the group of regional experts on research, training and innovation (cf. presentation of experts on www.connectalent.org) and external expertise, identified for all subjects covered by the call. This analysis phase will generate an analytical report on each project.

Stage 3: An examination of the reports drafted by the regional and external experts will be organized by the Steering Committee of the international the call for projects, comprising local authorities for the Pays de la Loire (conurbations of Nantes, Angers and Le Mans, the Region), the three universities in the region and the conference of *grandes*

écoles. This committee will conduct a pre-selection of the files considered to be the most promising and will organize feedback with the project initiators.

Stage 4: The applicants of the pre-selected projects will be invited to provide the Steering Committee with further details of their projects in order to define their project more precisely prior to the definitive selection and discussions on support and funding.

2.3. Evaluation criteria for applicant files

Applicant projects will be examined in accordance with 3 main criteria:

1. Quality and ambition:

- The academic quality of the project and the scope of the issues identified on the scientific, industrial and human level.
- The ambition of the project, on scientific, technological and innovative levels.
- Must demonstrate a high academic level and an indisputable international reputation (academic excellence of work by the team or the scientific leader, quality and dynamism of scientific production, quotation rate, scientific distinctions, particularly from the European Research Council (ERC), degree of international exposure of the team or scientific leader, scale of existing industrial relations)
- Must present a scientific project involving a risk and with considerable ambition in terms of international profile (the importance of the societal and scientific issues addressed, the pivotal character of the main subject of the research and new scientific questions raised, advancement of knowledge in relation to the state of the art, its interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary contribution, strategy to develop research production)

2. Added value and impact

- The match between applications and the themes of the regional ecosystem, ongoing projects and structural dynamics
- Its potential for development in terms of cooperation with academic and industrial structures in the region
- The knock-on effect and the expected impact of your project on an academic level, on the dynamics of innovation and on the economic and human level.

Applications must demonstrate their added value and their expected impact in term of:

- Accelerating structural and developmental changes scientifically, technologically and in terms of training at a regional level, including new collaborations with the academic and industrial structures in the region and its innovative forces.
- Added value in terms of international attractiveness for the Pays de la Loire region.
- Acquiring new and internationally acknowledged know-how and expertise, improving knowledge and development of major innovations (patents, publications).

3. Feasibility

Applications must include the preliminary elements required to analyse their feasibility:

- The economic dimensions of the project, particularly:
 - Its cost
 - The types of public support and financing envisaged.
 - The expected human and financial commitments from the public and private partners envisaged.
- The general feasibility of the project and the key factors for its success:
 - Its general organization: the means for constructing the network and collaborations, the effectiveness and durability of the project via ad hoc governance if necessary
 - The time scale envisaged
 - The technical and human resources
 - The necessary partnerships and interface with other initiatives interacting with the project.

3. Supporting projects

Support for the selected projects will take 4 forms:

1. Support for maturation of projects: assistance defining projects, feasibility study, organization, setting up the right regional, national and international partnerships.
2. Support for hosting and integrating projects in the regional ecosystem : hosting the associated skills and teams, supporting their integration in establishments in the region, integrating projects in regional higher level training, research and innovation strategies, with the support of all the support institutions
3. Support for actual research projects and infrastructures and creating better conditions in terms of environment
 - a. Support financing equipment, infrastructures
 - b. Support financing research teams and their research projects
 - c. Support implementing the best possible environmental conditions (including financing non-permanent personnel)
4. Logistic support and providing hosting and installation structures for project organizers and their families in the region: help preparing for the arrival of project organizers (providing practical information for everyday life, residency formalities, establishing contacts, reserving accommodation), assistance with administrative procedures (applying for residence permits, assistance and practical information with taxes, salaries, insurance, health coverage, bank accounts, etc.), schooling for children or child care, cultural integration (cultural and leisure activities, discovering the region, learning French, inter-cultural encounters, etc.).