"Connect Talent" 2015 International Call for Projects Specifications

Deadline for application for wave 2: February 26, 2016

1. The aim of the international "Connect Talent" call for projects

Pays de la Loire Region goes into action to support research, training and innovation projects. With the international call for project "Connect Talent", the academic and economic actors of Pays de la Loire hope to detect and support "breakthrough projects" towards their maturation.
The call for project "Connect Talent" will be open until beginning of 2016. Deadlines are the following: April 2015, September 2015 and February 2016.

By "breakthrough project" we mean: a project 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; a project that is capable of meeting one or several challenges in the field of training; 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.

The call for projects addresses a great variety of candidates:

- **Talents:** the call for projects is aimed at international scientific leaders (junior or senior researchers) working alone or with a team in order to kick-start a new research programme or accelerate the development of existing programmes

- **Technological research and development projects**: the call for projects is open to large research facilities, private R&D centres and critically-sized laboratories both in France and internationally

- **Training projects**: the call is open to educational establishments already present in the region and those from outside, provided they present ambitious development projects.

As regards scientific branches, projects could strengthen key abilities for the future of the territory in major fields such as those identified in integrated projects in research, training and innovation supported by Pays de la Loire Region ("RFI") in the field of acoustics, vegetal, renewable marine energies, numeric, professional electronics, agro food, tourism, material for molecular photonics and organic electronics, European studies, creative and cultural industries…

Strategic issues from integrated projects "RFI" and strengthening of key abilities as described below could be supported:
- In the "mechanics, materials" field: materials based on biopolymer components, functional material based on nanocarbones
- In the "health" and "vegetal" field: biology of development, fundamental biology, epigenetics
- In the "agro food" field: the development of "human and social sciences" area and appeal of private R&D centers
- In the "acoustics" field: appeal of private R&D centers
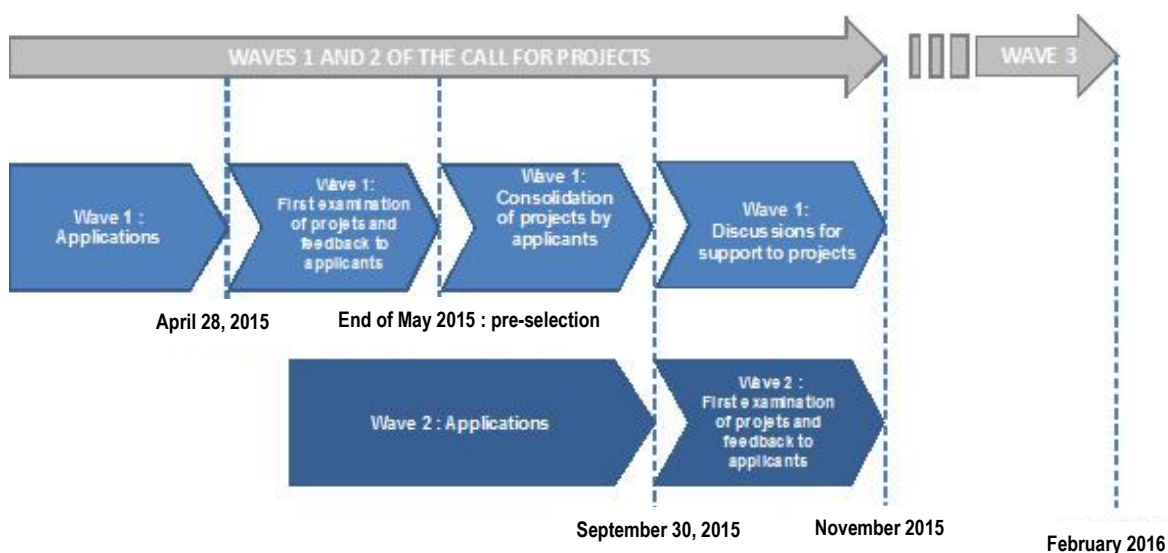- In the "city-environment" field: urban micro-climatology

A project group will be created for each identified major field to identify emerging projects. Complementary fields could be added in year 2015.

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 2015, September 2015 and February 2016.

The call for projects calendar breaks down as follows:

2.2. The process of analysing and selecting applicant files

The process of analysing and pre-selecting projects in the first wave will be concentrated in the month of July and will lead to communication with the project initiators until October 2013.

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.

Applicant projects will be examined in accordance with 3 main criteria
1. **Quality and ambition:**

   o The academic quality of the project and the scope of the issues identified on the scientific, industrial and human level.
   o The ambition of the project, on a scientific, technological and innovative level in terms of developing new pathways and fields for training.

➔ Applications coming under the heading of *"Talents"*
   o 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)
   o 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)

➔ Applications coming under the heading of *Technological research and development projects*
   o Projects must be of a high academic and scientific quality (excellent standard of the public and private research teams initiating projects, advancement in relation to the state of the art, integration of different disciplines)
   o Projects must demonstrate considerable ambition in terms of technology and innovation (be innovative in terms of the equipment and the technological innovations envisaged and the methodological approaches proposed, must have considerable potential to innovate the existing state of the art, to use equipment, disseminate technological developments and innovation inside regional, national and international scientific and industrial communities).

➔ Applications coming under the heading of "Training"
   o They must base their case on a high level of national and international academic recognition (acknowledgement of the quality of training, open at an international level, quality of national and international positioning, recognition of training by research), demonstrate their consistency in relation to underlying academic forces, the degree of involvement of professionals.
   o And express considerable ambition: a quality leap is expected in training on the level of international attractiveness, the quality of the training, the creation of new high-level channels, the introduction of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches, innovations in teaching, professional involvement and the acquisition of a high level of skills compared to the state of the art.

2. **Added value and impact**

   o The match between applications and the themes of the regional ecosystem, ongoing projects and structural dynamics
   o Its potential for development in terms of cooperation with academic and industrial structures in the region
   o 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:
   o 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.
   o Added value in terms of international attractiveness for the Pays de la Loire region.

   o Acquiring new and internationally acknowledged know-how and expertise, improving knowledge and development of major innovations (patents, publications).
   o Transfers and perspectives in terms of industrial and technological applications.
   o Economic potential and in terms of integrating the regional and national industrial activity.
   o Developing human capital and new high added-value skills.

3. Feasibility

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

   o 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.
   o 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. <u>Supporting projects</u>

Support for the selected projects will take 4 forms:

1. Support for maturation of projects: assistance defining projects, the feasibility study, organization, setting up the right regional, national and international partnerships.
2. Support for hosting and integrating projects in the regional ecosystem
  a. 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
  b. Support setting up new, private R&D centres in the region
  c. Support hosting and creating new training structures

3. Support financing research and training projects, the actual 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.).