

The University Network for Research Cooperation: A Belt and Road Science and Technology Initiative (iUNRC) Innovation Fund Call for Proposals 2025

To all member universities of iUNRC:

This call for proposals is with the purpose to promote the interconnection of member universities of the University Network for Research Cooperation: A Belt and Road Science and Technology Initiative (hereinafter referred to as “iUNRC”), strengthen the scientific research cooperation, and give full play to the leading role of scientific and technological innovation. In order to effectively implement the iUNRC's responsibilities, promote the sustainable development of the iUNRC, and enhance its international influence, the iUNRC Innovation Fund is specially established. Now we are calling for proposals 2025. The relevant matters are notified as follows.

1. Funding areas

The project funding areas focus on the major needs of the Belt and Road cooperation countries with global or regional influence, and focus on supporting but not limited to following nine priority areas listed in the Terms of Reference of iUNRC, including:

1. Big Data and Sustainable Development
2. Water/Clean Water and Sanitation
3. Affordable, Renewable and Green Energy
4. Sustainable Cities and Communities
5. Sustainable Agriculture and Smart Agriculture
6. Responsible Consumption and Production
7. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
8. Climate Change and Planetary Health

9. Digital Transformation of Education

2. Proposal Content

Funding support will be prioritized to scientific and technological research and development projects that have a significant impact on the local economy and society. The practical problems, scientific problems and technical bottlenecks to be solved should be concise and clear, and the key indicators should be designed to meet the international and domestic leading standards or produce notable outcomes. Project objectives should be clear, with well-defined boundaries, and be feasible. Descriptions should focus on the following aspects:

(1) Problem description. Describe the specific application problems or development bottlenecks expected to be resolved through scientific and technological cooperation and innovation. The content should be specific and clear, and fully describe the real-world application scenarios and core expected goals (indicators).

(2) Strategic significance. Describe the potential to achieve impactful innovative results in basic research and applied technologies, thereby enhancing the scientific and technological capabilities of the Belt and Road cooperation countries. At the same time, explain the strategic importance of this demand from the perspectives of gaining support from your government and demonstrating comparative advantages.

(3) R&D needs. If a mature concept has been developed, specific R&D suggestions can be put forward to solve relevant issues from the perspective of technological innovation, such as possible technological paths, key technical points, and critical scientific issues needing breakthroughs.

(4) Existing foundations. Summarize the current efforts and progress made domestically and internationally to address this issue through technological innovation, including accumulated technological achievements and the latest advancements and leading developments globally.

3. Funding Scale

The funding period for each project is 3 years, with an annual funding of no more

than 200,000 RMB and a total of no more than 500,000 RMB. Project funds are allocated for activities including visits and academic exchanges at Chongqing University by visiting scholars and international students from universities in Belt and Road countries. Expenses covered include international travel, accommodation, equipment, materials, and publication and dissemination costs, etc.

4. Research Period

The research period is from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028.

5. Related instructions

1. Each member university of iUNRC may recommend **up to five projects**.
2. After the collection of proposals, the iUNRC Secretariat will organize experts to review and release the call for proposals to Chinese universities within the iUNRC. Following joint application by Chinese and foreign universities, another review will be conducted. The review results will be submitted to the Council for approval and then the projects can be implemented. The funding results will be communicated via email.

6. Contact Information

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