



Announcement

1st German-Québec Call for Proposals for joint R&D projects by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Project applications and national funding applications will be accepted until October 13th, 2023.

1. Scope

The Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Energy of Québec and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) intend to support joint German-Québec research and development projects (R&D projects) in order to develop innovative products, processes or technical services from all technology and application areas. Funding will be available for R&D projects in which new products, technical services or processes will in subsequent steps generate sustainable solutions with high market potential.

In Germany, funding is provided through the Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM). In Québec, funding is provided through the Innovation Program and the Support Program for Research and Innovation Organizations (PSO-International).

The Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Energy of Québec and AiF Project GmbH, ZIM project management agency on behalf of the BMWK, will assist the project partners with basic information during the submission of project proposals, in the evaluation and in the implementation phase. All results will be announced 4 months after the submission deadline.

2. Call Structure

The call invites partners to present joint proposals for R&D projects until October 13th, 2023 according to the following procedures used by the Innovation Program, the PSO-International

Program and ZIM, specified in the respective guidelines of both funding programmes (ZIM in Germany).

2.1. Financing

Eligible project participants from Germany and Québec will finance their costs from the funding schemes applicable for this call set by the Innovation Program, the PSO-International Program and the German funding programme ZIM and complementarily from their own resources. Provision of funding from one funding agency will neither indicate that funding from the other funding agency will be provided, nor bind the other national scheme in its provision of funds to the eligible project participants.

2.2. Minimum requirements

Project results will have to contribute to the development of commercial products, processes and/or technology-based services, which are based on the international state of the art. The project proposals have to comply with the following guidelines:

- The partners must include at least one Québec company and one German SME.
- Participation of further research organisations and other companies are welcome as additional partners or subcontractors according to each country's funding schemes.
- Companies and/or research organisations from other countries may also participate. These partners' participation is neither funded by the Innovation Program, the PSO-International Program nor the ZIM. They have to be included into the Proposal Application Form.
- The project should focus on the development of new products, services or processes of industrial application, which are based on the international state of the art, leading to commercialisation in the domestic and/or global markets.
- The project should have an obvious advantage and differentiated value proposition resulting from the cooperation between the participants from the two countries (e.g. increased knowledge base, commercial leads, access to R&D infrastructure, new fields of application, etc.).
- Project duration should in principal not exceed 3 years.
- The project should demonstrate a balanced technological contribution by the participants from both countries and must be equally significant to all participants.
- In a project with two cooperating partners, no partner may contribute more than 70% of total person months to the project.
- In a project with more than two cooperating partners, no partner may contribute more than 50% of total person months.
- All research organizations involved in the consortium may altogether not contribute more than 50% of the total person months.

Any partner whose cooperative R&D project is consistent with the aforesaid criteria may apply to the present announcement in accordance with the national laws, rules, regulations and procedures in effect.

3. Submission

Between the opening of the call and the call deadline on October 13th 2023 all participants file one short common proposal in English language (Proposal Application Form), legally signed by all organisations participating in the project and a draft Consortium Agreement (not yet signed) that regulates the terms of cooperation between all partners (also in English). These documents have to be submitted electronically to zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de (German applicants).

The minimum requirements for the Consortium Agreement are:

- Naming of all project partners
- Description of the project aims, scope, role division and differentiation of the subprojects of the partners including their working plans with person months (for this the common application proposals can be declared as part of the agreement)
- A clause that provides for all partners to be informed if third parties are involved in the project
- Regulation of intellectual property rights (background and foreground)
- Basic regulation of joint commercialization and apportioning of benefits
- Joint final reporting is to be done according to the regulations set by ZIM and the Innovation Program or PSO-International Program
- If research organisations from Germany are involved, a passage has to be included that allows them to publish their own results without duty to obtain consent from the other partners.

The Consortium Agreement shall be consistent with the Innovation Program and the PSO-International Program and ZIM's terms and conditions for funding.

In addition to the common proposal, project partners who want to apply for funding within this call must submit a national application according to the respective rules (see below).

The Proposal Application Form as well as additional country-specific information and requirements are available at www.zim.de/quebec and at [Appel de projets de recherche et d'innovation à l'international 2022-2023 | Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)
[Soutien aux projets d'innovation \(investquebec.com\)](http://Soutien aux projets d'innovation (investquebec.com))

3.1 Québec

PSO-International Program

The PSO-International Program aims at increasing research collaborations between universities and businesses, as well as international, intersectoral and multisectoral partnerships. Projects must be the result of international collaboration and therefore must demonstrate balanced participation between the Québec and foreign parties. The overall project expenses (of all partners involved) must be shared in a way that the project's international partners (outside Québec) contribute at least 30% of said costs in cash or in kind. For the Québec part of the project, there must be at least:

- a Québec company (preferably an SME) or a Québec organization willing to integrate the results of the research project; and
- a research organization (a university, a CCTT, a public research centre, or a health care or education institution involved in R&D fields).

All partners involved in the project must provide a signed letter of commitment stating the terms of their respective participation. A minimum cash contribution of 20% of the total eligible expenses is required from a Québec company, except for social innovation projects. The combined support of the municipal, provincial, and federal governments, including the support from partners funded by these levels of government, cannot exceed 80% of eligible expenses, except for social innovation projects, for which the total can reach 100%. Grants, tax incentives, and loans related to the project are considered in the calculation of total contributions. The complete guidelines and rules for the PSO-International Program can be [consulted here](#).

Innovation Program

The Innovation Program aims at developing or significantly improving a product or a process, from the planning stage to the pre-commercialization stage. Eligible clienteles are:

- A company or group of companies from all sectors of activity.
- A social economy enterprise (cooperatives and NPOs) under the Social Economy Act (CQLR, chapter E 1.1.1).

For groups of businesses, applications for financial assistance can be submitted by a non-profit organisation (NPO) responsible for managing and monitoring the project. The NPO can set up the project, file the application and manage it. Assistance is conditional on a contribution from a Québec company (minimum 25% of the total project cost). Investissement Québec manages this program for the Government of Québec. The processing of financial assistance applications

(eligibility, analysis and decision) is the responsibility of Investissement Québec. The complete guidelines and rules for the Innovation Program can be [consulted here](#).

The Québec partner(s) is/are responsible for submitting a grant application to one of these programs for the funding on the Québec side. Other funding programs may apply and the Québec partners are encouraged to contact the national contact person to explore the relevant funding sources.

3.2 Germany

Each German project partner submits an individual ZIM application to the ZIM Project Management Agency AiF Projekt GmbH. Every SME with an establishment or branch in Germany, in accordance with the relevant EU regulations, as well as medium-sized companies with less than 500 employees (full-time equivalents), which carry out R&D for the development of innovative products, processes or technical services, are eligible to apply. Other medium-sized companies with less than 1,000 employees are eligible to apply for funding if they cooperate with at least one SME (in accordance with EU regulations) whose project is funded. Research and technology organizations are eligible to apply as cooperation partners of eligible companies.

An instruction on how to receive the ZIM application form and detailed criteria for submitting applications can be found on the ZIM website (www.zim.de); you may also contact AiF Projekt GmbH directly as described below. The application must be written in German and comply with the regulations of the ZIM guideline.

The national funding organisations, in Québec – the Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Energy and Investissement Québec – and AiF Projekt GmbH in Germany will be available to supply all interested parties with all relevant information.

3.3 Decision and project start

After the individual review process in the separate funding programs, decisions will be taken and communicated four months after submission deadline and projects should start after decisions are given to the applicants.

Consultation with the national funding organizations is highly recommended at an early stage.

Contact



Germany

Mr. Georg Nagel

AiF Projekt GmbH
Tschaikowskistraße 49
13156 Berlin
Germany

Phone: +49 30 48163-526

g.nagel@aif-projekt-gmbh.de

zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de

www.zim.de/international

Québec

Ms. Véronique Baril

Ministry of Economy,
Innovation and Energy of Québec
710 place d'Youville, Quebec City,
Quebec G1R 4Y4, Canada

Phone: 1 418 691-5698, ext. 3931

veronique.baril@economie.gouv.qc.ca

[Projets de recherche internationaux | Ministère
de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie
\(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)