**2025 Africa-Japan Collaborative Research (“AJ-CORE”)**

**on Environmental Science**

**Joint Proposal Form**

Note

Please fill all sections of this document, add the required attachments, and submit it as one PDF file before the deadline of Thursday, 7 August 2025, at 23:59 (SAST)/ 14:00 (JST). All proposals must be written in English.

For our process, it is advised that the name of the file be; ＜AJ-CORE\_ (acronym of the proposal) ＞

Two identical copies of this joint proposal form must be submitted to the JST and the NRF.

The Japanese PI must submit a joint proposal to JST through the National Online Submission System at (<https://www.e-rad.go.jp/>).

The South African PI must submit an identical application to the NRF through the NRF Online Submission System at (<https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>[/](https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/)).

South African applicants are advised to consult the NRF General Application Guide 2026, available at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/General-Application-Guide-2025-2026.pdf> for further details on how to apply for this opportunity (and to use the NRF Online Submission System).

\*Please fill appropriate text in the place shown in *blue italics*.

\*If 4th(>) African country joins, please create additional columns/pages accordingly.

\*Please delete unnecessary columns/pages depending on the proposal. e.g.) absence of 4th African country, Associated Partners, absent roles of “Co-PI” or “others”.

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Part.1　General Information

1. Title of the collaboration project

1. Acronym of the collaboration project

1. contribution to SDGs

*Please check* (replace □ to ■) *which of the following the proposed research will fit into:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| □ SDG #2 | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture |
| □ SDG #3 | Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages |
| □ SDG #6 | Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all |
| □ SDG #7 | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all |
| □ SDG #11 | Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable |
| □ SDG #12 | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns |
| □ SDG #13 | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts |
| □ SDG #14 | Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development |
| □ SDG #15 | Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss |

*\*You may select multiple goals.*

1. Key words (maximum 5)
2. Publishable summary of research project (50-60 words)
3. Budget overview for whole duration (3 fiscal years) ‡: required \*\*: required if any

\*1 Indicate “Role” in the following order: Principal Investigator (PI), co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) or other.

The amount of budget in this table must be consistent with the one in the corresponding budget table in Part.5 Budget Plan and with the budget in the online form.

\*2 Please indicate “New”, “In-Kind”, “re-budgeting” or “Other”.

Re-budgeting: If researcher have already received funds from own country’s funding agency and want to reallocate from one spending category to a proposed project.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Role in project  \*1 | Name  (Given, Family) | budget in local currency | Fund \*2 |
| South Africa | PI ‡ |  |  | NEW (NRF) |
| Co-PI |  | NEW (NRF) |
| Co-PI/Other |  | NEW (NRF) |
| Japan | PI ‡ |  |  | NEW (JST) |
| Co-PI |  | NEW (JST) |
| Co-PI/Other |  | NEW (JST) |
| 3rd/4th/5th  / 6th Partner(s)  *[country name]* | PI \*\* |  |  | *Select one* \*2  New[*name of funder*]/ In-Kind / re-budgeting[*name of funder*]/ Other[*brief description*] |
| 3rd/4th/5th  / 6th Partner(s)  *[country name]* | Co-PI |  |  | *Select one*\*2  New[*name of funder*]/ In-Kind / re-budgeting[*name of funder*]/ Other[*brief description*] |
| 3rd/4th/5th  / 6th Partner(s)  *[country name]* | Co-PI/Other |  |  | *Select one*\*2  New[*name of funder*]/ In-Kind / re-budgeting[*name of funder*]/ Other[*brief description*] |
| Associated Partner(s)  *[country name]* |  |  | N/A | *brief description* |

## Part.2　Project team members

‡: required \*\*: required if any

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Role in project | Name  (Given, Family) | Organization, Division | Title | Degree | Specialty |
| South Africa | PI ‡ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Co-PI |  |  |  |  |  |
| Co-PI |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |
| Japan | PI ‡ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Co-PI |  |  |  |  |  |
| Co-PI |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3rd/4th/5th Partner(s) | PI \*\* |  |  |  |  |  |
| Co-PI |  |  |  |  |  |
| Co-PI |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |
| Associated Partner(s) |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Part.3　Project description

*Please refer to the evaluation criteria in the framework.*

*Applicants are encouraged to insert figures or tables which could contribute to visual explanation and understanding of the project.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.1** | **Explanation** |
| Problem Statement  *(Max. 1600 words)* | Refers to an area of concern, a condition to be improved upon, a challenge to be explored, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a scholarly question that requires further interrogation to ground theory and praxis that points to the need for meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.2** | **Explanation** |
| Rationale & Literature Review  *(Max. 2500 words)* | - The **rationale** for the research is a set of reasons offered by a researcher for conducting more research into a particular subject. This could take a number of forms such as descriptive research, experimental research, etc.  - A **literature review** is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. It is a review of existing corpus of literature to affirm/amplify diverse theoretical underpinnings. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.3** | **Explanation** |
| Aims & Objectives  *(Max. 1000 words)* | - **Aims** are the broad statements of desired outcomes/ the general intentions of the research, which 'paint a picture' of an envisaged research project.  - The **objectives** of the research provide an accurate description of the specific actions the researcher intends to take in accomplishing research aims |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.4** | **Explanation** |
| Research Methodology  *(Max. 2500 words)* | The **research methodology** describes the rationale for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, collect, select, and analyse information applied to understanding the research problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study’s overall validity and reliability. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.5** | **Explanation** |
| Proposed Research Output  *(Max. 1500 words)* | This refers to the envisaged output ("product") of the research project in line with its objectives and may take the form of publications, public presentations, data, patents, artefacts, exhibitions, design, etc. The outputs should be detailed and quantified as far as possible. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.6** | **Explanation** |
| Synergy of the Joint Research Activity  *(Max. 1200 words)* | Includes how the groups complement each other to make an integrated consortium, with disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary value added from the proposed joint project. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.7** | **Explanation** |
| Potential Impact  *(Max. 1500 words)* | Refers to both the tangible and intangible influence derived and/or caused by the research outcomes/outputs. “Impact” statements indicate what the researcher hopes to achieve, without introducing any bias, through his/her research (i.e. impact on SDGs).  This section must be described in conjunction with Impact Pathway in Part.4. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.8** | **Explanation** |
| Science Engagement  *(Max. 1500 words)* | For the purposes of this application, the use of the overarching term science engagement is inclusive of all aspects of public engagement with science, science communication, science literacy as well as science outreach and awareness. It includes all participation by targeted groups of society in a programme aimed at generating mutual understanding and responses to science, including but not limited to awareness, accumulation of knowledge, enjoyment, opinion formulation and scientific literacy.    Applicant must indicate;  -          Type of engagement: publication, debate, social media etc.)  -          Objective (desired outcome)  -          Intended Audience |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.9** | **Explanation** |
| Transformation  *(Max. 1000 words)* | Give a brief description of how your research complies with transformational objectives relevant to each funder. Some or all of the following transformation contributions may be highlighted:  -Summary of the young researchers who will be involved in the project;  -General or specialist training to be offered to postgraduate students and young researchers;  -Support for postgraduate students and young researchers to attend and present at science meetings; |
| **For South Africa**  Collaborative initiatives with Historically Disadvantaged Institutions;  -Involvement of women and black students and researchers in the project;  -Special support offered to disadvantaged students. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.10** | **Explanation** |
| Proposed Research Plan  *(Max. 2200 words)* | A full **proposed research plan** outlining activities, who will be involved in each activity, where they will be done (with details of how many individuals / samples / sites etc.) and timelines is included in this section and this should substantiate the requested budget. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.11** | **Explanation** |
| Alignment to National Imperatives  *(Max. 800 words)* | Please outline how the project will contribute/is aligned to one or more national priorities/strategies/imperatives. |

*(description)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3.12** | **Explanation** |
| Data management and utilisation  *(Max. 600 words)* | Provide a summary of what processes and systems will be used to compile and manage data for the project. This could include a list of data fields that will be included in the data set, the software that will be used, how data will be captured, who will be responsible for the data capture and management, and whether any data quality checking and upgrading will be carried out. If there are other plans for long term data management and dissemination, briefly discuss these. |

*(description)*

## Part.4　Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level

**Format for Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level** (max. 2 pages)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Research outputs** | **Indicators** |  | **Research outcomes** | **Indicators** |  | **Impact** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |

Note: Outputs, outcomes and impacts need to be given with information when they are expected to happen in time.

## Part.5　Budgets plan

Budget plan for South African team

*- The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed* ***R2 040 000*** *(R 680 000 per annum, per project).*

*- R1, 3 mil per project for research activities, mobility costs of the research team, doctoral research placements, small equipment, knowledge sharing costs, etc.*

*- R740 000 for 1 postdoctoral position at R370 000 per annum for 2-years (R320 000 non-taxable stipend, R50 000 contribution towards research costs, and R15 000 compulsory institutional contribution).*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of costs** | **2026** | **2027** | **2028** | **Total** |
| Research related activities incl. small equipment, consumables & accessories *(Motivation Max. 1000 words)* |  |  |  |  |
| Running Expenses *(Motivation Max. 1000 words)*   * Costs of joint conferences, meetings & workshops * Airfare * Accommodation * Subsistence |  |  |  |  |
| Science Engagement incl. publication costs *(Motivation Max. 1000 words)* |  |  |  |  |
| Masters and doctoral research placements |  |  |  |  |
| Student Funding *(Motivation Max. 1000 words)*  - Master’s Degree  - Doctoral Degree  - Postdoctoral position |  |  |  |  |
| **Subtotal** |  |  |  |  |

Note: The amount of budget in this table must be consistent with the one in the corresponding budget table in Part.1 (Budget Overview) and with the budget in the online form.

Budget plan for Japanese team

*- Please describe the financial plan in Japanese Yen.*

*- Maximum budget to be claimed is 18.2 million yen including overhead expenses.*

*- Please register same budget (UNIT: 1,000Yen) on the e-Rad system*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Type of costs** | **2026** | **2027** | **2028** | **TOTAL** |
| Direct Expense | Research  Materials |  |  |  |  |
| Equipment |  |  |  |  |
| Travel and  Living expenses |  |  |  |  |
| Personnel cost |  |  |  |  |
| Others  (including Network Meetings  /Workshops/  Outsourcing) |  |  |  |  |
| Subtotal |  |  |  |  |
| Overhead Expenses \* | |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL | |  |  |  |  |

\* 30% of the sum of direct expense.

Note: The amount of budget in this table must be consistent with the one in the corresponding budget table in Part.1 (Budget Overview) and with the budget in the online form.

Budget plan for 3rd/ 4th/ 5th / 6th partnerteam

*- Please describe the financial plan in local currency.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of costs** | **2026** | **2027** | **2028** | **Total** |
| Research related activities |  |  |  |  |
| Running Expenses *(Motivation Max. 1000 words)*   * Costs of joint conferences, meetings & workshops * Airfare * Accommodation * Subsistence |  |  |  |  |
| Science Engagement incl. publication costs *(Motivation Max. 1000 words)* |  |  |  |  |
| Student support costs |  |  |  |  |
| Employment costs\* |  |  |  |  |
| Overheads |  |  |  |  |
| **Subtotal** |  |  |  |  |

\* *Costs for employing someone for research activities should be budgeted. Please do not confuse with your salary payment.*

Note: The amount of budget in this table must be consistent with the one in the corresponding budget table in Part.1 (Budget Overview) and with the budget in the online form.

## Part.6　CVs

PI(s) must submit their CVs. If 4th(>) African country joins, CV is required regardless of his/her role. CV for PI(s) only required but this does not preclude the submission of CVs for Co-PI(s) and other members who would play a prominent role in the consortium.

South African based Principal Investigator *(max 1 page)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Given Name |  | Family Name |  |
| Organization |  | Department |  |
| Division |  | Title/Position |  |
| Telephone No. |  | Email |  |
| Mailing Address |  | | |

**Educational record**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Institution | Year/Period of study | Field of study | Degree and year of completion |
|  |  |  |  |

**Previous employment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Position |
|  |  |

**Awards and memberships**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Award / Membership |
|  |  |

**Key publications – List of the past 5 years**

Japanese based Principal Investigator (*max 1 page)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Given Name |  | Family Name |  |
| Organization |  | Department |  |
| Division |  | Title/Position |  |
| Telephone No. |  | Email |  |
| Mailing Address |  | | |

**Educational record**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Institution | Year/Period of study | Field of study | Degree and year of completion |
|  |  |  |  |

**Previous employment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Position |
|  |  |

**Awards and memberships**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Award / Membership |
|  |  |

**Key publications – List of the past 5 years**

*3rd/4th/5th* / 6th *Partner* Principal Investigator *(max 1 page)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Given Name |  | Family Name |  |
| Organization |  | Department |  |
| Division |  | Title/Position |  |
| Telephone No. |  | Email |  |
| Mailing Address |  | | |

**Educational record**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Institution | Year/Period of study | Field of study | Degree and year of completion |
|  |  |  |  |

**Previous employment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Position |
|  |  |

**Awards and memberships**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Award / Membership |
|  |  |

**Key publications – List of the past 5 years**

**Format Letter of Intent**

***Annex.1 Format letter of Intent Please delete when submitted***

*\* Signed LOI must be added as an Annex to the proposal.*

*\* Letter of intent is to confirm that a researcher understands his or her responsibilities in the consortium.*

*\* There is no desired standard template for this.*

**Project title:**

**Acronym:**

Hereby all project partners agree to the content of the project proposal and confirm their planned cooperation and responsibility to the project.

South African based PI

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(Date)**

Japanese based PI

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(Date)**

3rd/4th/5th */6th Country* based PI

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(Date)**

Associated partner(s)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(Date)**

**Format Institutional Endorsement Letter**

***Annex.2*** ***Format Institutional endorsement Letter Please delete when submitted***

*\* For Associated Partner(s), institutional endorsement letter should be given by institutional head or equivalent.*

*\* Institutional endorsement letter is to validate the consortium’s application to the call. The 3rd /4th/5th /6th partner PIs and Co-PIs are required to submit.*

*\* Finance-related terms do not apply to in-kind participants.*

*\* Those who will submit the letter can use their institution’s own template.*

TO the committee of African-Japan Collaborative Research (“AJ-CORE”)

This is to certify that:

1. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the Principal Investigator/co-Principal Investigator of the project

titled…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. is

working in our University/ Institute/Organization will assume the full responsibility for

implementing the project.

2. The Investigator is a regular employee of our University/ Institute/Organization and

working as ……………………………………………….. in ………………………………………………………...

department.

3. The date of project starts from the date on which the University/Institute/ Organization receives the grant from AJ-CORE.

4. The investigator will be governed by the rules and regulations of University/Institute/Organization and will be under administrative control of the University/Institute/Organization for the duration of the project.

5. The grant by AJ-CORE will be used to meet the expenditure on the project and for the period for which the project has been sanctioned as mentioned in the sanction order.

6. No administrative or other liability will be attached to AJ-CORE at the end of the project.

7. The University/Institute/Organization will provide basic infrastructure and other required facilities to the investigator for undertaking the research project.

8. The University/ Institute/Organization will take into its books all assets created in the above project.

9. The University/ Institute/Organization assumes to undertake the financial and other management responsibilities of the project.

Seal of Signature………………………………………………….

University/ Institute/Organization………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Registrar of University/Head of the Institute/Head of organization

Date:…………………………………………………………..

***Annex.3*** ***Information on 3rd/4th/5th / 6th Partner Principal Investigator Please delete when submitted***

*\*3rd/4th/5thPartner Principal Investigators must provide information to the funders. This page will go to the 3rd/4th/5th /6th partner funders for eligibility check.*

**Information on 3rd/4th/5th /6th Partner Principal Investigator**

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** |  |
| **Academic title** |  |
| **Family Name** |  |
| **First Name** |  |
| **Name of Institution** |  |
| **Type of Entity** |  |
| **Department** |  |
| **Position** |  |
| **Institution Address** |  |
| **City** |  |
| **Country** |  |
| **Phone** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Which funding body are you applying to?** |  |

**BUDGET (indicate currency in USD)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **2026** | **2027** | **2028** |
| **Research costs** |  |  |  |
| **Travel and meeting costs** |  |  |  |
| **AJ-CORE kick-off, mid-term and final workshops** |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge Sharing and Research Uptake costs** |  |  |  |
| **Student support costs** |  |  |  |
| **Employment costs** |  |  |  |
| **Overheads** |  |  |  |
| **Other costs (specify)** |  |  |  |
| **Total budget requested** |  |  |  |

I hereby confirm that as the 3rd/4th/5th / 6th Partner Principal Investigator, I meet the funding requirements of my national funding body.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Signature Date……………………………………………………………………….