

2025 2nd Call for Applications for Brain Pool(BP) Fellowship Program

The Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) hereby announces the 2025 2nd call for new projects under the Brain Pool(BP) Program.

We invite applications following the procedures outlined below.

May 30, 2025

Yoo Sang-im
Minister, Ministry of Science and ICT

Hong Won-hwa
President, National Research Foundation of Korea

I. Overview

1. Program Objectives

- The Brain Pool (BP/BP+) Program aims to invite outstanding overseas scientists to domestic research institutions in academia, industry, and research sectors. By fostering world-class research collaborations, the program seeks to generate high-quality research outcomes; internationalize the domestic research environment; secure new growth drivers; nurture early-career researchers and establish global research networks.
- ※ New Track for 2025: To support R&D institutions in attracting international talent in their priority research areas, a new Institution-Led invitation Type has been introduced.

2. Project Scale & Funding

□ Program Type : Institution Type

※ R&D Institutions apply with strategic overseas scientists invitation plans

□ Quota : Approx. 6 projects

□ Funding Scale : KRW 300 – 900 million / year

※ First-year funding will be calculated on a prorated monthly basis depending on the research start date (including indirect costs).

□ Research Duration : 3 years (2025.9.1.-2027.12.31.)

II. Detailed Call for Proposals

1 (Brain Pool) Institution Type (New)

1. Overview

□ Eligible Applicants: Research and development (R&D) institutions

※ Each R&D institution must develop a **strategic recruitment plan to attract international talents in research fields that Korea's R&D institutions are prioritizing for development, such as natural sciences, life sciences, medicine, engineering, and ICT convergence**, and submit applications accordingly.

□ Target Candidates: PhD holders residing overseas at the time of employment

□ Supported Research Fields: All fields of science and technology

□ Project Composition (※ Each institution may submit only one project application)

- Each R&D institution must select one academic field (natural sciences, life sciences, medicine, engineering, or ICT convergence). Within the selected field, up to three CRB/RB (Chief Review Board/Review Board) subfields can be included.

[Project Structure Example]

Project Structure Example		R&D Proposal Preparation	Evaluation	Management
Institution A		The institution must outline a strategic recruitment <u>plan aligned with its core research fields and institutional support framework</u> . The detailed research plan, expected outcomes, <u>selection criteria for BP fellows, and utilization of them must be specified</u> . ※ The institution does not need to specify individual candidates at the time of submission. (Proposing a list of prospective candidates for invitation is encouraged)	A comprehensive assessment of the institutional recruitment/ inviting strategy, support plan, and research content. ※ The evaluation panel will be formed based on the applicant's selected research specialization and assigned weighting	Personnel costs, airfare, insurance, relocation costs, child education support will be covered under the BP guidelines
CRB I	RB① Domestic Researcher └ overseas scientist			The institution must report the employment of overseas scientists to the NRF.
CRB II	RB② Domestic Researcher └ overseas scientist └ overseas scientist			At least 60% of the total research funding must be allocated to overseas scientist salaries.
CRB III	※ RB (Research Team Unit) : Domestic co-researcher + Multiple BP fellows			Indirect costs: 5% of the total research budget.

※ Each CRB/RB category can include up to three subfields, with an assigned weight totaling 100%.

※ The principal investigator (PI) must be a representative co-researcher or a senior faculty member (department chair/dean) overseeing the entire project.

□ Funding & Project Duration

Type	Research Period	Funding	Remarks
Full-time	2025.09.01. – 2027.12.31.	KRW 300 million – 900 million per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding can be allocated flexibly, prioritizing overseas scientist salaries. ※ Overseas scientist expenses must be aligned with BP program guidelines, including personnel costs, airfare, insurance, relocation costs, and child education support.

□ **Funding Details:** KRW 300 million – 900 million per year

※ Supports strategic recruitment/invitation of international talents in research fields that the institution prioritizes for development.

○ **Personnel Costs(for BP fellow): Minimum 5 million – Maximum 25 million/month* (KRW)**

- * Salary level must be equivalent to the annual salary at the scientist's original institution(affiliation), including severance pay and employer-contributed benefits (rounded up to the nearest million KRW).
- At least 60% of the total research budget must be allocated to salaries for overseas scientists.

○ **Research Activity Expenses**

- Airfare, insurance, relocation expenses, child education support, and research activity incentives for living in Korea will be provided according to BP program guidelines.
- ※ Please, refer to the BP Program Guide for detailed funding criteria and regulations.

○ **Indirect Costs: 5% of modified direct costs**

○ Aside from the above restrictions, **research funding may be structured according to the National R&D Innovation Act.**

- However, international joint R&D expenses and subcontracted R&D expenses cannot be allocated.
- ※ Co-researchers(Domestic researchers) may use research funding, whereas in the Individual type, funding can only be used for the overseas scientist.

Direct Costs			Indirect Costs
Labor Cost	Research Activity Expenses	Other Direct Cost	
Personnel Costs (BP fellows, postdoctoral researchers, student researchers) & other salary categories specified under the National R&D Innovation Act	<u>Airfare, insurance, relocation expenses, child education support, overseas researcher recruitment support fund(research activity incentives)</u> & other eligible expenses as defined by the National R&D Innovation Act ※ International joint R&D expenses and subcontracted R&D expenses cannot be allocated	Must comply with the National R&D Innovation Act regulations	<u>5%</u> of modified direct costs (including subsidies for dedicated support personnel)

Key Guidelines for Application and Research Budget Execution

- ※ At least 60% of the total research budget must be allocated and executed for the salaries of BP fellows(overseas scientists).
- Employment and salary payments should be carried out according to the plan; however, for the first year only, applicants are advised to implement the recruitment plan while considering the time required for relocation.
- * If salary payments cannot be executed due to delays in visa issuance or other unavoidable circumstances, exceptions may be granted. However, depending on the operational status in the first year, the project may be subject to termination.
- ※ Apart from these restrictions, research funds may be structured according to the National R&D Innovation Act and can be used jointly with domestic co-researchers.
- ※ Each project must designate one dedicated support personnel(assistant staff), and 50% of the allocated indirect costs must be used for their salary.
- The designated personnel should assist with the overseas scientist's settlement and daily life in Korea.

2. Selection Scale & Eligibility

□ **Selection Scale(Tentative): Approximately 6 projects**

□ **Eligibility**

○ **Host Institutions (Research Institutions) ※ Each institution may submit only one project application**

- Eligible institutions include government-funded research institutes, national and public research institutes, universities and university-affiliated research institutes, corporations and corporate-affiliated research institutes, or non-profit foundation research institutes, in Korea
- ※ Ineligible institutions are foreign research/educational institutions established in Korea, or branches of domestic institutions located overseas.
- ※ Institutions selected under the 1st 2025 announcement (Institution Type) are ineligible for this support.

○ **Principal Investigator (PI)**

- must be the lead co-researcher within the project. Alternatively, a department chair or dean responsible for overseeing the project may also serve as the PI.

○ **Participating Researchers**

1. Co-researcher

- **must be affiliated with a domestic research institution and hold one of the following positions - Assistant Professor or higher; Senior Researcher or higher; or Corporate R&D Director or Research Institute Director.**
- ※ Only one co-researcher per RB field (a small research group within a CRB field) is allowed, **responsible for managing overseas scientists and supervising research activities within the designated field.**
- ※ They must qualify as a participating researcher under the National R&D Innovation Act and remain in the project until completion. Unjustified withdrawal or replacement may result in penalties under relevant regulations.

2. Other researchers

- Undergraduate and graduate students (Master's/PhD), Research staff at the Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD level.

○ **Overseas Scientists (BP candidate)**

- **Must hold a PhD and reside outside Korea at the time of employment.**
- For corporations and corporate-affiliated research institutes, candidates without a PhD may qualify if they have at least five years of R&D experience in an overseas industry.
- ※ **Ineligible candidates** are PhD candidates yet to obtain their degree, individuals temporarily residing overseas, or individuals affiliated with a domestic institution in Korea.

Key Guidelines for Establishing the Overseas Scientist Recruitment/invitation Plan

- ※ Applicants cannot recruit individuals who are expected to obtain a PhD at the time of employment or those who are temporarily residing overseas. (Verification by the host institution is required.)
- ※ Unlike the Individual type, applicants do not need to specify a particular overseas researcher at the time of application. However, the proposal must include a detailed implementation plan, including salary allocations, recruitment plans, and research content, encouraged to suggest necessary candidates and describe the coordination process.
- Once the recruitment of the overseas scientists is completed, the host institution must report the details to the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) and ensure that the required salary ratio is maintained.
- If an overseas scientist becomes unable to continue due to personal circumstances (e.g., employment in Korea or abroad), their replacement is allowed with prior approval from the NRF.
- Please define criteria and select foreign scientists by career stage and experience
- ※ The host institution is responsible for managing the recruited overseas scientists. All other management-related matters must comply with the BP Program Guide.

3. Application Period

□ **Announcement Period:** May 30, 2025 (Fri) – July 2, 2025 (Wed)

□ **Application Period** (※ Refer to p.9 for Application Method)

Phase	Principal Investigator (PI) Online Application Period	Approval Period by Research Institution
2nd call	May 30, 2025 (Fri) – July 2, 2025 (Wed) 18:00:00 (KST)	May 30, 2025 (Fri) – July 4, 2025 (Fri) 18:00:00 (KST)

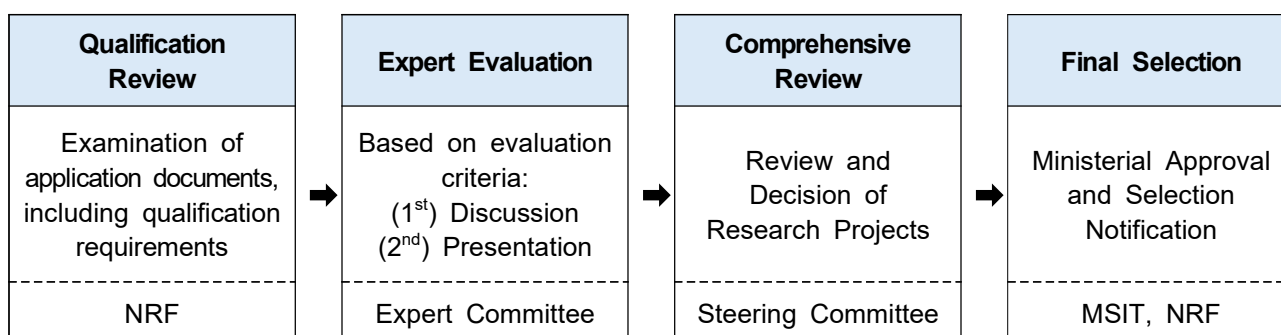
※ Applications will be automatically closed via the IRIS system at the deadline.

No exceptions will be granted after the submission deadline.

※ The application period and submission calls are subject to change based on the project selection status.

4. Evaluation Method

□ **Evaluation Process**



※ The evaluation process and methods are subject to change depending on the application and submission status.

○ **Qualification Review:** Examination of application documents, including qualifications.

○ **Expert Evaluation:** Two-stage assessment based on evaluation criteria:

- **(1st : Discussion Evaluation)** Panel discussion among external experts to shortlist projects for presentation evaluation.

- **(2nd : Presentation Evaluation)** PI presents research content and recruitment plans.

※ Additional representatives may attend for the institutional recruitment plan presentation.

Evaluation criteria and scoring weights may differ between rounds.

○ **Comprehensive Review:** Final review and decision of projects based on overall policy direction, including remaining budget, budget allocation per recruitment type, and priority research fields

○ **Final Selection:** Approval by the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) and official selection notification by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF)

□ Evaluation Criteria & Scoring

Evaluation Category	Evaluation Indicators	Score	
		1 st Stage	2 nd Stage
Alignment with Program Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Alignment of the proposed research field with national policies and justification for government support · Need for international talent recruitment in the given research field and institution 	30	20
Selection and Recruitment of Overseas Scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Validity and specificity of the criteria for selecting overseas scientists · Capability to recruit overseas scientists and feasibility & specificity of the recruitment plan 	30	20
Research Plan for Utilizing Overseas Scientists and Expected Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Excellence and specificity of the research plan, objectives, and utilization of recruited scientists · Institutional capability to support and integrate overseas scientists · Qualitative and quantitative impact of recruiting overseas scientists, including anticipated research achievements and broader effects 	20	30
Support Plan & Long-term Utilization of Overseas Scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Institutional commitment and support plans for invited scientists (e.g., research funding, lab space, administrative assistance, settlement and housing support) · Post-project plans for overseas scientists (e.g., long-term employment, continued international collaboration, joint research) 	20	30
Total		100	100

5. Timeline_BP Institution type

Date	Details
Friday, May 30, 2025	Announcement of the 2025 BP Fellowship Program 2 nd Call for New Proposals
Mid-June 2025	Program Information Session
Wednesday, July 2, 2025	(BP Institution Type) PI's Application Deadline (18:00:00 KST)
Friday, July 4, 2025	(BP Institution Type) Research Institution's Approval Deadline (18:00:00 KST)
July – August 2025	Selection Evaluation (Eligibility Review, Expert Evaluation, Comprehensive Review) and Final Selection (mid-May)
September 1, 2025	Project Commencement

※ The schedule is subject to change based on project progress.

6. Important Notes for Application and Participation

- Institutions must ensure compliance with program guidelines and relevant laws **while being granted flexibility in fund management to support strategic recruitment of overseas talents in their priority research fields.**
- Selected projects must bring and employ overseas scientists to conduct research as planned.
 - **At least 60% of the total expense finds must be allocated to the labor costs of invited scientists(BP fellow).**
 - ※ Exceptions may be granted in the first year only in unavoidable cases such as visa issuance delays or changes in participating researchers (invited scientists), but the project and funding may be suspended based on operational status.
 - ※ Salary increases for already recruited scientists are not allowed without a justifiable reason; institutions must ensure proper personnel management.
- Research funding can only be executed after the agreement is signed and the project begins.
 - Expenses such as salaries for invited scientists, airfare, insurance, relocation costs, and child education support should be executed under the BP guidelines, and other costs may be structured and used according to the National R&D Innovation Act.
- The host research institution is responsible for directly managing the invited scientist's activities, attendance, and utilization. BP program guidelines and the official program guide must be followed.
 - ※ Institutions must ensure strict management of research projects and invited scientists based on project objectives and research plans.
 - ※ Institutions must thoroughly review the eligibility criteria and required documents for invited scientists to prevent any omissions.
- Exemption from the **Simultaneous Research Project Limit Policy** applies, in accordance with the National R&D Innovation Act and its Enforcement Decree. (Researchers can participate in up to five R&D projects simultaneously, with a maximum of three projects as the principal investigator.)
- If a researcher or institution withdraws from the project without a valid reason, participation restrictions or financial penalties may be imposed under the National R&D Innovation Act and its Enforcement Decree.
- **For overseas business trips of invited scientists exceeding six months, approval from the implementing agency (NRF) is required.**
 - ※ Limited approval may be granted based on alignment with the research plan.
- If the invited scientist relocates or is employed domestically or internationally (including full-time employment at the host institution), participation must be terminated and the researcher replaced.
 - ※ Initial employment must be reported to the NRF, and any change in the invited scientist requires prior approval from NRF.
- All research publications and outputs must include an acknowledgment of support and specify the host R&D institution.
- **Arbitrary changes to performance goals(R&D objectives) between the application and the contract stage are not allowed. If it need to be adjusted during the project, prior approval from NRF is required.**

7. Required Documents

Required Documents for Application	
<p>① R&D Proposal</p> <p>② Consent Form for the Use of Personal and Tax Information (PI and Domestic Researchers)</p> <p>③ Research Ethics, Integrity, and Security Pledge (PI and Domestic Researchers)</p> <p>④ (For corporations and corporate-affiliated research institutes only) Corporate Participation Agreement and Supporting Documents , Eligibility Verification Documents</p>	
Documents to be Verified by the Host Research Institution After Selection	
<p>① Salary Proof for the Past One Year of the Invited Scientist (Including personal/institutional contributions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly salary statements or salary certificates issued by the overseas scientist's original affiliated institution (official stamp or seal required) <p>② Certificate of Residency or Equivalent Document issued by an authorized government agency in the scientist's country of residence</p> <p>③ Final Degree Certificate (PhD) or Career Certificate* of the Invited Scientist</p> <p>* A career certificate is required if the invited researcher does not hold a PhD but has at least five years of R&D experience in an overseas industry and is being recruited by a corporate research institute.</p> <p>④ Letter of Acceptance from the Invited Scientist (Free format)</p> <p>⑤ Consent Form for the Use of Personal and Tax Information (Invited Scientist and Dedicated Support Staff)</p> <p>⑥ Research Ethics, Integrity, and Security Pledge (Invited Scientist and Dedicated Support Staff)</p> <p>⑦ Other Documents Related to the Entry of the Invited Scientist (Official Proof of entry and exit records from January 1, 2024)</p>	
Key Guidelines for Document Submission	
<p>※ The R&D Proposal must include the cover page, summary, appendices, and relevant guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The R&D Proposal must be written in Korean by the domestic principal investigator. However, academic content, including the research plan, may be written in English for collaboration with the overseas scientist. <p>※ All documents must be submitted in the prescribed format (refer to the annexed forms). Failure to submit required documents or using an incorrect format may result in disqualification during the Qualification review.</p> <p>※ The Letter of Acceptance from the Invited Scientist can be in free format. Email exchanges with an attached signature may also be accepted.</p> <p>※ The salary statement for the past one year is a mandatory document for salary calculation. Failure to submit this document may result in the cancellation of employment by the host institution.</p> <p>※ All Documents must be submitted in either Korean or English. If the original document is in another language, an official notarized translation in Korean or English must be attached.</p> <p>※ Any false information in the submitted documents may lead to project cancellation, even after final selection.</p> <p>※ Applicants must verify the final PDF version of all uploaded documents on IRIS system to ensure no errors occur during submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common issues include missing tables/images, security-restricted documents, hidden comments, and the use of paid or bundled fonts. 	

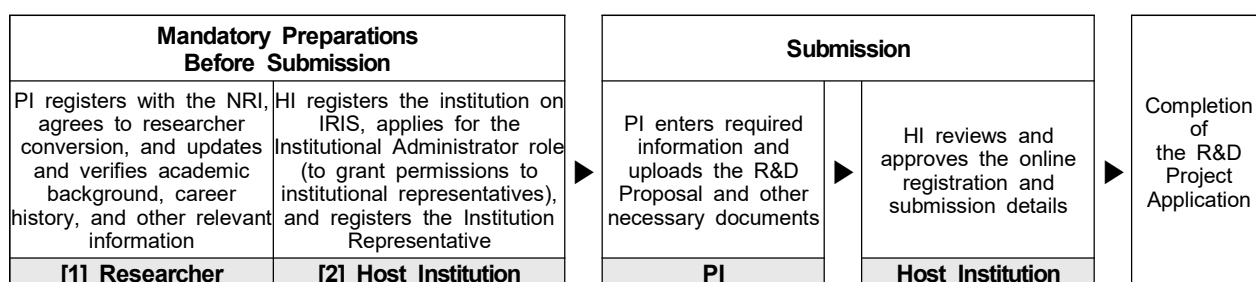
III. Application Method & Eligibility Restrictions

□ Online Application (via IRIS SYSTEM) ※ Application will be submitted by Host PI (not a BP candidate)

▶ The application, evaluation, and management of new projects for the 2025 Brain Pool Program will be conducted through IRIS (<https://www.iris.go.kr>), operated by the Korea Institute of S&T Evaluation and Planning (KISTEP), replacing the previous e-R&D system of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF).

* IRIS(Integrated R&D Information System) is a unified, government-wide research support system integrating various ministerial and agency-specific R&D management platforms

※ The Principal Investigator (PI) must log into the IRIS (<https://www.iris.go.kr>), enter the required information, upload the R&D Proposal and other necessary documents, and obtain verification and approval from the Host Institution.



※ Before submission, the researcher must confirm with the research administration staff whether the Host Institution approval can be processed.

▶ To ensure a smooth application process via IRIS, all applicants must complete the required pre-submission steps in advance.

※ For details, refer to [Appendix (Manual) 1-1]Mandatory Pre-Submission Requirements for R&D Project Applications (KISTEP IRIS Operations Team) and [Appendix (Manual) 1-2]: IRIS Membership Registration (Researcher Conversion) and Researcher Information Registration Guide.

[1] (Researcher) ① Register as an IRIS member, ② Move to NRI (National Researcher Information System) within IRIS and agree to researcher conversion (National Researcher ID issuance), ③ In NRI, update and register the academic background and career history (workplace and department details must be included) and the list of research projects (completed in the past five years, as well as ongoing and pending projects).

※ Requirements by Role: Steps ①& ② Mandatory for all participating researchers, including the PI (Student researchers under a unified payroll system are exempt.), Step ③Mandatory only for the PI.

[2] (Host Institution) Register the institution on IRIS, apply for the Institutional Administrator role (to grant permissions to institutional representatives), and register the Institution Representative

※ Both the Institution Representative and Institutional Administrator must register as IRIS members and agree to researcher conversion (National Researcher ID issuance). If the Institution Representative is not registered, researchers will be unable to complete the application process. All mandatory pre-submission steps must be completed before the application period begins.

▶ IRIS Helpdesk : IRIS Call Center 1877-2041 or
IRIS Website → Notification & Customer Support → System & Service
Inquiries → User Inquiry Board

※ Evaluation will be conducted based on the selected technical classification (evaluation specialty fields, etc.) chosen in the IRIS system.

□ Application Restrictions and Disqualification Criteria

- **(Eligibility Restrictions for Principal Investigator Applicants)** Researchers subject to participation restrictions or penalties under the National R&D Innovation Act and its Enforcement Decree are ineligible to apply.
- **(Ineligible R&D Institutions)** Applications will be excluded if the institution falls under any of the following conditions.

1. Bankruptcy of the Host Institution, Collaborative Institution, or Subcontracting Institution
2. Outstanding tax liabilities (national or local taxes) Exception: If the institution has received re-startup funds from the Small and Medium Business Corporation (SBC) or the Credit Recovery Committee (Re-startup Support Committee), or if it has received credit recovery guarantees from the Korea Credit Guarantee Fund (KODIT) or the Korea Technology Finance Corporation (KOTEC).
3. Registered as a defaulter under the Civil Execution Act or by a credit information agency. Exception: Same as above (SBC, Credit Recovery Committee, KODIT, KOTEC).
4. Filed for bankruptcy, rehabilitation procedures, or individual rehabilitation procedures. Exception: If the institution is duly repaying debts according to a court-approved rehabilitation or repayment plan.
5. A company that has been in business for more than three years based on financial statements and meets either of the following conditions for two consecutive years: Debt ratio exceeds 500% (excluding new borrowings through CB or BW investments from venture capital associations). Current ratio is 50% or lower. Exception: The following cases are exempt: Companies with a corporate credit rating of "BBB" or higher. Companies with a technology credit rating of "BBB" or higher from a technology credit assessment agency (TCB). Foreign-invested companies under the Foreign Investment Promotion Act, with over 50% foreign ownership and established within the last five years. Companies established within three years before the application deadline are also exempt from this criterion.
6. A company with total capital impairment based on the most recent financial statement. Exception: If the company has undergone a corporate restructuring diagnosis and normalization approval through the SME Business Health Management System.
7. An externally audited company with a recent audit opinion of "Disclaimer of Opinion" or "Adverse Opinion" on its financial statements.

※ However, this restriction does not apply to non-profit organizations and public enterprises (corporations).

- **(Restrictions on Similar Project Applications)** Applicants must verify in advance whether the proposed research plan is distinct from previously funded national R&D projects (including those funded by other ministries).
 - If a project is deemed identical or insufficiently differentiated from an existing project, it will be disqualified from selection.

IV. Inquiries

CONTACT	
IRIS System	IRIS Call Center ☎1877-2041
Inquiries Regarding Application Submission	International Talent Exchange Team, National Research Foundation of Korea (BP): ☎ + 82- 2- 3460- 5744, 5746 / ✉ sjhan @nrf.re.kr , djkim @nrf.re.kr
Q&A in English for preliminary BP fellow	Brain Pool Support Team ☎: +82-70-8806-5152 / E-mail: ghd_nrf@etners.com

※ If phone inquiries are not available, please contact us via email.